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THE CENTENNIAL:

BATTLE

OF

BUNKER HILL.

BY

RICHARD FROTHINGHAM.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
1875.

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OF

BUNKER HILL.

WITH

VIEW OF CHARLESTOWN IN 1775, PAGE'S PLAN OF THE ACTION, ROMANS' EXACT VIEW OF THE BATTLE, AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

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RICHARD FROTHINGHAM.

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THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The "Exact View of the Battle" is reproduced from an American engraving of 1775. It appeared in a reduced form in the "Pennsylvania Magazine" of that year.

Page's "Plan of the Action" was engraved for the "History of the Siege of Boston." It is the only accurate plan of Charlestown of that date. The Hills are wrongly named. "Bunker Hill" should be Breed's Hill.

The "View of Charlestown" is from a MS., and was engraved for the "History of the Siege of Boston."

These illustrations are fac-similes of the originals.

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BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL.

I.

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS. NEW ENGLAND. BUNKER HILL.

THE events of the great day of Lexington and Concord battle changed the American cause from commercial war to armed resistance. The colonies were then in the relation of Union, with a basis of brotherhood, common peril, and a common object. Its embodiment was the government of congresses and committees inaugurated by the Continental Congress. "The country," wrote Samuel Gray, July 12, 1775, "have the greatest confidence in its wisdom and integrity. No laws were ever more binding upon all ranks of people than their orders." This government continued until the ratification of the Articles of Confederation. Under its authority the colonies enrolled the militia for the common defence.

In Massachusetts, the Provincial Congress appointed a Committee of Safety, and gave it authority to summon the militia when it should be

required; and chose as its generals Artemas Ward, Seth Pomeroy, John Thomas, and William Heath. Thus an army, in fact, was in existence, ready, at a moment's call, for defensive purposes, to wheel its isolated platoons into solid phalanxes; while it presented to an enemy only the opportunity of an inglorious foray upon its stores.

The military force which, on the Lexington and Concord alarm, repaired to the towns around Boston and held the British army in a state of siege, was composed of citizen soldiers set apart for this purpose. They had the moral power of the Union.

On the 17th of June, Congress had adopted this force. Washington had accepted the post of commander-in-chief: but only the four New England colonies had their militia in the field before Boston.

The Massachusetts Provincial Congress (Sunday, April 30) resolved that an army of thirty thousand was necessary for the defence of the country; and to raise, as the proportion of this colony, thirteen thousand six hundred troops. Fifty-nine men were to form a company, and ten companies a regiment; and those who raised companies or regiments were promised commissions to command them. Artemas Ward was appointed commander-in-chief; John Thomas, lieutenant-general; and Richard Gridley, the chief engineer. Measures were taken to raise a train of artillery;

but it was not fully organized when the battle of Bunker Hill took place. So slowly did the work of organization go on, that General Ward, in a letter, May 19, stated, that, to save the country, "it was absolutely necessary that the regiments be immediately settled, the officers commissioned, and the soldiers mustered." His own commission had not been issued. On this day Congress adopted the form of one for the commander, and passed orders relative to the ranks of the regiments and the officers. The settlement of the ranks of the officers, however, was referred to a future time.

Connecticut voted to raise six thousand men, and organized them into six regiments, of ten companies each, — one hundred men constituting a company. Joseph Spencer, with the rank of brigadier-general, was the senior officer in command, who arrived with one regiment early in May, and took post at Roxbury. Captain John Chester's fine company formed part of it. Another regiment, commanded by Israel Putnam, with the rank of brigadier-general, was stationed at Cambridge. The 6th Regiment was under Colonel Samuel Holden Parsons; two companies of which — his own and Chapman's — were ordered, June 7, to the camp, and subsequently one other, Captain Coit's; the remainder of it being stationed, until after the battle of Bunker Hill, at New London. The disposition of these troops was directed by a

"committee of war," which supplied them with ammunition and provisions.

The Rhode Island Assembly voted to raise fifteen hundred men, to constitute "an army of observation," and ordered it to "join and co-operate with the forces of the neighboring colonies." This force was organized into three regiments, of eight companies each, under Colonels Varnum, Hitchcock, and Church, and placed under the command of Nathaniel Greene, with the rank of brigadier-general. One of the companies was a train of artillery, and had the colony's field-pieces. General Greene, on arriving at the camp, Jamaica Plains, found his command in great disorder; and it was only by his judicious labors, and great personal influence, that it was kept together. In the rules and regulations for the government of this force, it is called "The Rhode Island Army." They provide that "all public stores, taken in the enemy's camp or magazines," should be "secured for the use of the colony of Rhode Island." It was not until June 28 that this colony passed an act putting its troops under the orders of the general of the combined army.

The New Hampshire troops assembled at Medford, where the field-officers, April 26, held a meeting, and advised the men to enlist temporarily in the service of the Massachusetts colony. They also recommended Colonel John Stark to take the

charge of them. This was done. The New Hampshire Congress, May 20, voted to raise two thousand men, adopted those that had already enlisted, and voted that "the establishment of officers and soldiers should be the same as in the Massachusetts Bay." They were organized into three regiments, and placed (May 23) under the command of Nathaniel Folsom, with the rank of brigadier-general. Two regiments were organized under Colonels John Stark and James Reed. On the 2d of June, General Folsom ordered Colonel Reed to collect his companies, — part of which were at Medford, under Colonel Stark, — and "put himself under the command of General Ward, until further order." On the 13th of June, by order of Ward, this regiment, fully officered, took post at Charlestown Neck. Colonel Enoch Poor was appointed to command the third regiment, which, however, did not arrive at the camp until after June 17. Nor did General Folsom arrive at Cambridge until June 20.

The official returns of the army are so defective and inaccurate, that it is impossible to ascertain, with precision, its numbers. The "grand American army" consisted of about sixteen thousand men. Massachusetts furnished about 11,500; Connecticut, 2,300; New Hampshire, 1,200; Rhode Island, 1,000. It was so peculiarly constituted, each colony having its own establishment, supplying its

troops with provisions and ammunition, and directing their disposition, that its only element of uniformity was the common purpose that called it together. General Ward was authorized to command only the Massachusetts and New Hampshire forces, though a voluntary obedience was yielded to him by the whole army, as the commander-in-chief. Nor was it until after the experience of the battle of Bunker Hill that the Committee of War of Connecticut, to remedy the evils of the want of "a due subordination," and "of a general and commander-in-chief," instructed Generals Spencer and Putnam to yield obedience to General Ward, and advised the colonies of Rhode Island and New Hampshire to do the same respecting their troops.

"We have the pleasure," the "Essex Gazette" of June 8 says, "to inform the public that the grand American army is nearly completed. Great numbers of the Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island troops are arrived; among the latter is a fine company of artillery, with four excellent field-pieces."

General Artemas Ward, the commander-in-chief, had served under Abercrombie, was a true patriot, had many private virtues, and was prudent and highly esteemed; Thomas was an excellent officer, of a chivalrous spirit and noble heart, and was much beloved; Putnam, widely known, not less

for his intrepid valor than for his fearless and energetic patriotism, was frank and warm-hearted, and of great popularity; Pomeroy had fought well at Louisburg, where Gridley had won laurels as an accomplished engineer; Prescott, in the French war, had exhibited great bravery, and military skill of a high order; Stark, hardy, independent, brave, was another of these veterans; and Greene was commencing a service that was to build up a fame second only to that of Washington. These commanders constituted the Council of War.

It is difficult to give with precision the number of British troops in Boston under General Gage at the time of the battle. A report of June 11 estimates them at five thousand. The "London Chronicle" of the 8th of June says: "General Gage's present force consists of the 27th, 35th, and 64th Regiments of foot; the re-enforcements sent are the 40th, 45th, 49th, and 63d Regiments of foot; and General Preston's light-horse. This force, when complete, it is said, cannot be less than ten thousand men." A letter on the British side, dated Boston, June 18, says: "All the troops from Ireland are arrived in good health and excellent condition. Only sixteen horses died in the passage, and they brought forty spare ones. Sixteen of the transports which were ordered from England to New York are by the General ordered to Boston; with this addition our army will then amount to

about ten thousand men. . . . The word with the Sons of Liberty, as the rebels style themselves, is 'join or die.' I expect to hear of bloody work soon, as our troops are determined to lay all the country waste as they go, with fire and sword."

The general officers destined for America were Generals Burgoyne, Clinton, and Howe. When they embarked, the following impromptu appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine:" —

> "Behold the 'Cerberus' the Atlantic plow,
> Her precious cargo, Burgoyne, Clinton, Howe,
> Bow! wow! wow!"

The "Cerberus" arrived May 25. When sailing into Boston, she met a packet coming out, bound to Newport. General Burgoyne asked the skipper of the packet what news there was. Being told that Boston was surrounded by ten thousand country people, he asked how many regulars there were in Boston; and being answered about five thousand, cried out with astonishment, "What! ten thousand peasants keep five thousand king's troops shut up! Well, let *us* get in, and we'll soon find elbow-room."

The feelings of officers and men is well stated in a letter written in the "Grenadier Camp" on the 12th of June, by Captain Harris, subsequently Lord Harris, who commanded a company of grenadiers. "Affairs at present wear a serious aspect. I wish the Americans may be brought to a sense of their duty. One good drubbing, which I long to give

them, by way of retaliation, might have a good effect towards it. At present they are so elated by the petty advantage they gained the 19th of April, that they despise the power of Britain, who seems determined to exert herself in the conflict. Troops every day coming in, and such as will soon enable us to take the field on the other side of the Demel, *alias* the Neck."

There were continual reports to the effect that the British intended to sally out of Boston. Measures were adopted to prevent this. The Committee of Safety and the Council of War appointed a joint committee to reconnoitre the heights of Charlestown. Their report, May 12, recommended the construction of a breastwork near the Red House; one near the road leading to the McLean Asylum; another opposite, on the side of Prospect Hill; a redoubt on the top of the hill where the guard-house stood, Winter Hill, to be manned with three or four 9-pounders; and a strong redoubt on Bunker Hill, provided with cannon, to annoy the enemy either going out by land or by water. "When these are finished," the Committee say, "we apprehend the country will be safe from all sallies of the enemies in that quarter." This report was referred to the Council of War. At this time there was no place in Charlestown known as Breed's Hill.

The Council of War accepted the report so far as to authorize the construction of a part of these

works. But on the most important measure, that of occupying Bunker Hill, there was much difference of opinion. General Putnam, Colonel Prescott, and other veteran officers, were strongly in favor of it, and chiefly to draw the enemy out of Boston on ground where he might be met on equal terms. They urged that the army wished to be employed, and that the country was growing dissatisfied with its inactivity. They felt great confidence in the militia. "The Americans," Putnam said, "were not afraid of their heads, though very much afraid of their shins: if you cover these, they will fight for ever." Generals Ward and Warren were among those who opposed it; and chiefly because the army was not in a condition, as it respected cannon and powder, to maintain so exposed a post, and because it might bring on a general engagement, which it was neither politic nor safe to risk. It was determined to take possession of Bunker Hill, and also of Dorchester Heights, but not until the army should be better organized, more abundantly supplied with powder, and better able to defend posts so exposed.

The patriots had reports, considered reliable, as to the contemplated operations of General Gage. His Orderly Book indicates immediate work. One order, June 15, reads: "The regiments who have not completed their grenadiers and light-infantry with officers, are to do it immediately." An order on the 16th is: "The regiments arrived from Ire-

land to examine their arms and ammunition immediately. Each soldier to be completed with sixty rounds of cartridges and three good flints, and see that their arms are put in the best order." He fixed upon the night of June 18 to take possession of Dorchester Heights. Authentic advice of this was communicated, June 13, to the American commanders. The Committee of Safety passed, on the 15th, the following resolve: —

"Whereas, it appears of importance to the safety of this colony that possession of the hill called Bunker's Hill, in Charlestown, be securely kept and defended; and, also, some one hill or hills on Dorchester Neck be likewise secured: therefore, resolved, unanimously, that it be recommended to the Council of War that the above-mentioned Bunker's Hill be maintained, by sufficient forces being posted there; and as the particular situation of Dorchester Neck is unknown to this Committee, they advise that the Council of War take and pursue such steps respecting the same as to them shall appear to be for the security of this colony."

The Committee appointed Colonel Palmer and Captain White to join with a committee from the Council of War, and proceed to the Roxbury camp for consultation; also to communicate the above resolve to the Council.

But small progress had been made in building fortifications. Breastworks had been thrown up in Cambridge, and on the Cambridge road near

the base of Prospect Hill; but no works had been commenced on Prospect or Winter Hill. The army was posted nearly in the following manner: The right wing, under General Thomas, was at Roxbury, and consisted of about four thousand Massachusetts troops. The Rhode Island forces, under Greene, and the greater part of Spencer's regiment of Connecticut troops, were at Jamaica Plains. General Thomas had three or four artillery companies, with field-pieces, and a few heavy cannon. General Ward's head-quarters were at Cambridge, where the centre division of the army was stationed. It consisted of fifteen Massachusetts regiments; the battalion of artillery, hardly organized, under Colonel Gridley; and General Putnam's regiment, with other Connecticut troops. They were quartered in the colleges, in the church, and in tents. Most of the Connecticut troops were at Inman's Farm; part of Little's regiment was at the tavern in West Cambridge; Patterson's regiment was at the breastwork, near Prospect Hill; and a large guard was at Lechmere's Point. There were in Cambridge, it is stated (probably incorrectly), but four companies of artillery with field-pieces. Of the left wing of the army, three companies of Gerrish's regiment were at Chelsea; Stark's regiment was at Medford; and Reed's regiment was at Charlestown Neck, with sentinels reaching to Penny Ferry (Malden Bridge) and Bunker Hill.

The return nearest in date to the battle that I have been able to find of the troops at Cambridge is the following, dated June 9, and entitled, "Return of the Army at Cambridge:" —

Regiments.	*Privates.*	*Regiments.*	*Privates.*
Whitcomb	470	Frye	493
Brewer	318	Scamman	396
Nixon	224	Prescott	456
Little	400	Gerrish	421
Mansfield	345	Woodbridge	242
Gridley (artillery)	370	Ward	449
Bridge	315	Gardner	425
Doolittle	308	Patterson	422
			6,063
		Drummers, &c.	1,581
			7,644

The peninsula of Charlestown is situated opposite to the north part of Boston, and is separated from it by Charles River. It is about a mile in length, from north to south. Its greatest breadth, next to Boston, is about half a mile, whence it gradually becomes narrower until it makes an isthmus, called the Neck, connecting it with the mainland. The Mystic River, about half a mile wide, is on the east side; and on the west side is Charles River, which here forms a large bay, — a part of which, by a dam stretching in the direction of Cobble Hill, is a mill-pond. The Neck, an artificial causeway, was so low as to be frequently overflowed by the tides. The com-

munication with Boston was by a ferry, where Charles River Bridge is, and with Malden by another, called Penny Ferry, where Malden Bridge is. Near the Neck, on the mainland, was a large green, known as The Common. Two roads ran by it, — one in a westerly direction, as now, by Cobble Hill (McLean Asylum), Prospect Hill, Inman's Woods, to Cambridge Common; the other in a northerly direction, by Ploughed Hill (Mount Benedict), Winter Hill, to Medford. Bunker Hill begins at the isthmus, and rises gradually for about three hundred yards, forming a round, smooth hill, sloping on two sides towards the water, and connected by a ridge of ground on the south with the heights now known as Breed's Hill. "Bunker Hill" was well known, — the name being in the town records and deeds from an early period. Not so with "Breed's Hill," for it is not named in any description of streets previous to 1775. Nor have I met with the name, in any private letter or public paper, prior to the date of the battle. The tract of land was called after the owners of the pastures into which it was divided. Thus, Monument Square was a portion of a tract called Russell's Pasture; Breed's Pasture lay further south; Green's Pasture was at the head of Green Street. The easterly and westerly sides of this height were steep; on the east side, at its base, were brickkilns, clay-pits, and much sloughy land; on the west side, at the base, was the most settled

part of the town. Moulton's Point, a name coeval with the settlement of the town, constituted the south-east corner of the peninsula. A part of this tract formed what is called, in all the accounts of the battle, "Morton's Hill." "Moulton" was the name known in Charlestown. Bunker Hill was one hundred and ten feet high, Breed's, seventy-five feet, and Morton's Hill, thirty-five feet. The principal street of the peninsula was Main Street, which extended from the Neck to the Ferry. A highway from sixteen feet to thirty five feet wide ran over Bunker Hill to Moulton's Point, and one connecting with it wound round the heights now known by the name of Breed's Hill. The easterly portions of these hills were used chiefly for hay ground and pasturing; the westerly portions contained fine orchards and gardens. There was near the Boston Ferry a market-place, — now the Square. Here were a church, a court-house, a school-house, and a jail.

A View of Charles Town, and the Back Ground, as far as the Narrow Pass. Taken from the Beacon Hill.

II.

Breed's Hill Fortified. Cannonade of the British. The Landing at Charlestown.

ON Friday, the 16th of June, the commanders of the army took measures to fortify Bunker Hill. Orders were issued for Prescott's, Frye's, and Bridge's regiments, and a fatigue party of two hundred Connecticut troops, to parade at six o'clock in the evening, with all the intrenching tools in the Cambridge camp. They were ordered to furnish themselves with packs, blankets, and provisions for twenty-four hours. Captain Gridley's company of artillery, of forty-nine men and two field-pieces, was also ordered to parade. The Connecticut men, drafted from several companies, were put under the gallant Thomas Knowlton, a captain in General Putnam's regiment. He was a prosperous farmer, living in Ashford, Connecticut, and had served with distinction in the French wars. He appeared, on the Lexington alarm, in the militia company, and was unanimously elected captain.

This would have constituted a force of at least fourteen hundred; but only three hundred of Prescott's regiment, a part of Bridge's, and a part of

Frye's under Lieutenant-Colonel Bricket, the artillery, and the two hundred Connecticut troops, were ordered to march. Hence the number may be fairly estimated at twelve hundred.

The detachment was placed under the command of Colonel William Prescott, of Pepperell, who had orders in writing, from General Ward, to proceed that evening to Bunker Hill, build fortifications to be planned by Colonel Richard Gridley, the chief engineer, and defend them until he should be relieved. The order was not to be communicated until the detachment had passed Charlestown Neck. It was understood that re-enforcements and refreshments should be sent to Colonel Prescott on the following morning.

Colonel Prescott was over six feet in height, of strong and intelligent features, with blue eyes and brown hair, large and muscular, but not corpulent. He had served with distinction as a lieutenant under General Winslow, at Cape Breton. He had commanded a regiment of minute-men. His brother-in-law, Colonel Willard, a few months previous, endeavoring to dissuade him from the active part he was taking, suggested that his estate and life would be forfeited for treason. He replied: "I have made up my mind on that subject. I think it probable I may be found in arms; but I will never be taken alive. The tories will never have the satisfaction of seeing me hanged."

General Putnam enjoyed great popularity with the army. An acrostic in the newspapers of the day gives the idea entertained of him : —

" P ure mass of courage, every soldier's wonder,
U nto the Field he steps, inrobed with martial Thunder,
T ares up the elements, and rends the Earth asunder.
N ature designed him for the Field of Battle,
U nused to Statesmen's wiles or courtier's prattle,
M ars-like, his chief Delights, where thundering cannon rattle."

He not unlikely was among the Connecticut troops. One of them says his talk was: " Men! there are enough of you on the Common this evening to fill hell to-morrow, so full of the red-coats, that the devils will break their shins over them."

This detachment paraded on Cambridge Common at the time appointed. After a fervent and impressive prayer by President Langdon, of Harvard College, it commenced, about nine o'clock, its memorable march for Charlestown. Colonel Prescott was at its head, arrayed in a simple and appropriate uniform, with a blue coat and a three-cornered hat. Two sergeants, carrying dark lanterns, were a few paces in front of him, and the intrenching tools, in carts, in the rear. Colonel Gridley accompanied the troops. They were enjoined to maintain the strictest silence, and were not aware of the object of the expedition until they halted at Charlestown Neck. Here Major Brooks joined them ; and, probably, General Putnam and

another general. Here Captain Nutting, with his company and ten of the Connecticut troops, was ordered to proceed to the lower part of the town as a guard. The main body then marched over Bunker Hill, and again halted for some time. Here Colonel Prescott called the field-officers around him, and communicated his orders. A long consultation took place in relation to the place to be fortified. The veteran Colonel Gridley, and two generals, one of whom was General Putnam, took part in it. The order was explicit as to Bunker Hill; and yet a position in the pastures nearer Boston, now known as Breed's Hill, seemed better adapted to the objects of the expedition, and better suited the daring spirit of the officers. "One general and the engineer were of opinion we ought not to intrench on Charlestown Hill (Breed's Hill) till we had thrown up some works on the north and south ends of Bunker Hill, to cover our men in their retreat, if that should happen; but, on the pressing importunity of the other general officer, it was consented to begin, as was done." That the best position was Breed's Hill, Judge Prescott says, was "Colonel Gridley's opinion, and the other field-officers who were consulted, — they thought it came within his (Prescott's) orders. There was not then the distinction between Bunker Hill and Breed's that has since been made." Thus it was concluded to proceed on to the place

where the monument now stands. At the same time, it was determined that works should be erected on Bunker Hill, — the hill on which the Francis De Sales (Catholic) church stands. When the detachment reached the place, the packs were thrown off, the guns were stacked, Colonel Gridley marked out the plan of a fortification, tools were distributed, and about twelve o'clock the men began to work. Colonel Prescott immediately detached Captain Maxwell, of his own regiment, and a party, with orders to patrol the shore in the lower part of the town, near the old ferry, and watch the motions of the enemy during the night. General Putnam, after the men were at labor, returned to Cambridge.

Anxious to the patriot laborers were the watches of that star-light night. The shore in Boston, opposite to them, was belted by a chain of sentinels; while nearer still, British men-of-war were moored in the waters around them, and commanded the peninsula. The "Falcon" was off Moulton's Point; the "Lively" lay opposite the present Navy Yard; the "Somerset" was at the ferry; the "Glasgow" was near Craigie's Bridge; and the "Cerberus," and several floating batteries, were within gun-shot. This proximity to an enemy required great caution; a thousand men, accustomed to handling the spade, worked with great diligence and silence on the intrenchments; while

the cry of "All's well!" heard at intervals through the night by the patrols, gave the assurance that they were not discovered. Colonel Prescott, apprehensive of an attack before the works were in such a condition as to cover the men, went down twice to the margin of the river with Major Brooks to reconnoitre, and was delighted to hear the watch on board the ships drowsily repeat the usual cry. The last time, a little before daylight, finding every thing quiet, he recalled the party under Maxwell to the hill.

"Colonel Prescott was often heard to say that his great anxiety that night was to have a screen raised, however slight, for his men before they were attacked, which he expected would be early in the morning, as he knew it would be difficult, if not quite impossible, to make raw troops, however full of patriotism, to stand in an open field against artillery and well-armed and well-disciplined soldiers. He therefore strenuously urged on the work; and every subaltern and private labored with spade and pickaxe, without intermission, through the night, and until they resumed their muskets near the middle of the next day. Never were men in worse condition for action, — exhausted by watching, fatigue, and hunger, — and never did old soldiers behave better." These are the words of Judge Prescott.

The intrenchments, by the well-directed labor of

the night, were raised about six feet high. They were first seen at early dawn, on the 17th of June, by the sailors on board the men-of-war. The captain of the "Lively," without waiting for orders, put a spring on her cable and opened a fire on the American works. The sound of the guns, breaking the calmness of a fine summer's morning, alarmed the British camp, and summoned the population of Boston and vicinity to gaze upon the novel spectacle. Admiral Graves almost immediately ordered the firing to cease; but, in a short time, it was renewed, by authority, from a battery of six guns and howitzers, from Copp's Hill, in Boston, and from the shipping. The Americans, protected by their works, were not at first injured by the balls; and they kept steadily at labor, strengthening the intrenchments, and making inside of them platforms of wood and earth to stand upon when they should be called upon to fire.

Early in the day Asa Pollard, a private, was killed by a cannon-ball. A subaltern informed Prescott of this, and asked what should be done. "Bury him," he was told. "What!" said the astonished officer, "without prayers?" A chaplain insisted on performing service over the first victim, and gathered many soldiers about him. Prescott ordered them to disperse. The chaplain again collected his audience, when the deceased was ordered to be buried. Some of the men left

the hill. To inspire confidence, Colonel Prescott mounted the parapet and walked leisurely around it, inspecting the works, giving directions to the officers, and encouraging the men by approbation, or amusing them with humor. One of his captains, understanding his motive, followed his example while superintending the labors of his company. This had the intended effect. The men became indifferent to the cannonade, or received the balls with repeated cheers. "The Americans," a British writer says, "bore this severe fire with wonderful firmness, and seemed to go on with their business as if no enemy had been near." The following vessels took part in the cannonade during the day. The position of the "Cerberus" is not given in the plans of the battle: —

Somerset,	68 guns, 520 men.	Captain	Edward Le Cras.
Cerberus,	36 „	„	Chads.
Glasgow,	24 „ 130 „	„	William Maltby.
Lively,	20 „ 130 „	„	Thomas Bishop.
Falcon,		„	Linzee.
Symmetry,	20 „		

The tall, commanding form of Prescott was observed by General Gage, as he was reconnoitring the Americans through his glass, who inquired of Councillor Willard, near him, "Who the person was who appeared to command." Willard recognized his brother-in-law. "Will he fight?" again inquired Gage. "Yes, sir; he is an old soldier,

and will fight as long as a drop of blood remains in his veins!" "The works must be carried," was the reply.

As the day advanced the heat became oppressive. Many of the men, inexperienced in war, had neglected to comply with the order respecting provisions, while no refreshments had arrived. Hence there was much suffering from want of food and drink, as well as from heat and fatigue; and this produced discontent and murmurs. The officers urged Colonel Prescott to send a request to General Ward for them to be relieved by other troops. The Colonel promptly told them, in reply, that he never would consent to their being relieved. "The enemy," he said, "would not dare to attack them; and if they did, would be defeated: the men who had raised the works were the best able to defend them; already they had learned to despise the fire of the enemy; they had the merit of the labor, and should have the honor of the victory."

Colonel Prescott, about nine o'clock, called a council of war. The officers represented that the men, worn down by the labors of the night, in want even of necessary refreshments, were dissatisfied, and in no condition for action, and again urged that they should be relieved, or, at least, that Colonel Prescott should send for re-enforcements and provisions. The Colonel, though decided against the proposition to relieve them, agreed to send a

special messenger to General Ward for additional troops and supplies. The officers were satisfied, and Major John Brooks, afterwards Governor Brooks, was despatched for this purpose to head-quarters, where he arrived about ten o'clock.

General Ward, early in the morning, had been urged by General Putnam to send re-enforcements to Colonel Prescott, but was so doubtful of its expediency that he ordered only one-third of Stark's regiment to march to Charlestown; and after receiving the message by Major Brooks, he refused to weaken further the main army at Cambridge, until the enemy had more definitely revealed his intentions. He judged that General Gage would make his principal attack at Cambridge, to destroy the stores. The Committee of Safety, then in session, was consulted. One of its most active members, Richard Devens, strongly urged that aid should be sent; and his opinion partially prevailed. With its advice, General Ward, about eleven o'clock, ordered the whole of the regiments of Colonels Stark and Reed, of New Hampshire, to re-enforce Colonel Prescott. Orders, also, were issued for the recall of the companies stationed at Chelsea.

The Provincial Congress, convened at Watertown, held sessions morning and afternoon. The Committee of Safety, in session at Cambridge, issued an order to the selectmen of the towns to send all

the town stocks of powder instantly to Watertown. The Committee of Supplies, by David Cheever, in a letter to the Committee of Safety, states that, exclusive of thirty-six half-barrels of powder received from the governor and council of Connecticut, there were only in the magazine twenty-seven half-barrels, and that no more could be drafted from the towns, without exposing them more than they would consent to.

The Committee of Safety asked for "four of the best riding-horses," to bring quick intelligence to head-quarters. The Committee of Supplies replied that they had no horses at present, but what were unfit for use, or were wanted for the expresses of that committee. "We have received," says the letter, "but ten out of the twenty-eight horses ordered by Congress to be delivered us, and are informed that those left behind are some of the best. Pray take them, if to be found, unless detained by the generals. We have sent to procure four, which shall be sent as soon as possible."

During the forenoon a flood-tide enabled the British to bring three or four floating-batteries to play on the intrenchments, when the fire became more severe. The men-of-war at intervals discharged their guns, — the "Glasgow," one account states, continued to fire all the morning. The only return made to this terrific cannonade was a few ineffectual shot from a cannon in a corner of the

redoubt. About eleven o'clock the men had mostly ceased labor on the works. The intrenching tools had been piled in the rear, and all were anxiously awaiting the arrival of refreshments and re-enforcements. No works, however, had been commenced on Bunker Hill, regarded as of great importance in case of a retreat. General Putnam, who was on his way to the heights when Major Brooks was going to Cambridge, rode on horseback to the redoubt, "and told Colonel Prescott" — as General Heath first relates the circumstance — "that the intrenching tools must be sent off, or they would be lost. The Colonel replied, that if he sent any of the men away with the tools, not one of them would return. To this the General answered, they shall every man return. A large party was then sent off with the tools, and not one of them returned. In this instance the Colonel was the best judge of human nature." A large part of the tools were carried no farther than Bunker Hill, where, by General Putnam's order, the men began to throw up a breastwork. Most of the tools fell into the hands of the enemy.

Soon after this, the enemy were observed to be in motion in Boston. General Gage had called a council of war early in the morning. As it was clear that the Americans were gaining strength every hour, it was the unanimous opinion that it was necessary to change the plan of operations that

had been agreed upon, and drive them from their newly erected works. Different views prevailed as to the manner in which it should be attempted. General Clinton, and a majority of the council, were in favor of embarking a force at the Common, in Boston, and, under the protection of their batteries, landing in the rear of the Americans, at Charlestown Neck, to cut off their retreat. A royalist in Boston at this time used to relate, that knowing the British officers were in consultation at the Province House, on the morning of this day, he called there to learn their intentions. Immediately after the arrangements had been made for the attack, he met in the front yard an officer, who warmly inveighed against the decision of the other officers. "It would cost many lives to attack in front; but the English officers would not believe the Americans would fight." In the morning General Gage said to General Timothy Ruggles: "It is impossible for the rebels to withstand our arms a moment." Ruggles replied: "Sir, you do not know with whom you have to contend. These are the very men who conquered Canada. I fought with them side by side; I know them well; they will fight bravely. My God! Sir, your folly has ruined your cause." General Gage opposed the plan of attack in the rear as unmilitary and hazardous. It would place his force between two armies, — one strongly fortified, and the other

superior in numbers, — and thus expose it to destruction. It was decided to attack in front, and Gage immediately issued the following momentous orders: —

"General Morning Orders.

"June 17, ten o'clock.

"The companies of the 35th and 49th Regiments that are arrived, to land as soon as the transports can get to the wharf, and to encamp on the ground marked out for them on the Common. Captain Handfield is appointed to act as an assistant to the deputy-quartermaster-general, and is to be obeyed as such. The ten oldest companies of Grenadiers, and the ten oldest companies of Light Infantry, exclusive of the regiments lately landed, the 5th and 38th Regiments, to parade at half-past eleven o'clock, with their arms, ammunition, blankets, and the provision ordered to be cooked this morning. They will march by files to the Long Wharf. The 52d and 43d, with the remaining company of Grenadiers and Light Infantry, to parade at the same time with the same directions, and march to the North Battery. The 47th and 1st Battalion of Marines will also march, as above directed, to the same battery, after the rest are embarked, and be ready to embark there when ordered. The rest of the troops will be kept in

readiness to march at a moment's warning. One subaltern, one sergeant, one corporal, one drummer, and twenty privates to be left by each corps, for the security of their respective camps. Any man who shall quit his ranks on any pretence, or shall dare to plunder or pillage, will be executed without mercy."

It was then customary to select from each regiment the tallest and finest-looking men to form a company of Grenadiers, who occupied the right of the battalion when in line, and led in attack. They were distinguished by a high cap and other peculiarities in dress. Hence the companies ordered out may well be termed the flower of the army. This force was put under the command of General Howe, who had under him Brigadier-General Pigot, and some of the most distinguished officers in Boston. He was ordered to drive the Americans from their works.

About twelve o'clock the several regiments marched through the streets of Boston to their places of embarkation, and two ships of war moved up Charles River to join the others in firing on the works. Suddenly the redoubled roar of the cannon announced that the crisis was at hand. The "Falcon" and the "Lively" swept the low grounds in front of Breed's Hill, to dislodge any parties of troops that might be posted there to oppose a

landing; the "Somerset," and two floating-batteries at the ferry, and the battery on Copp's Hill, poured shot upon the American works; the "Glasgow" frigate, and the "Symmetry" transport, mounting twenty guns, moored farther up Charles River, raked the Neck. The troops embarked at the Long Wharf and at the North Battery; and when a blue flag was displayed as a signal, the fleet, with field-pieces in the leading barges, moved towards Charlestown. The sun was shining in meridian splendor; and the scarlet uniforms, the glistening armor, the brazen artillery, the regular movement of the boats, the flashes of fire, and the belchings of smoke, formed a spectacle brilliant and imposing. The army landed in good order at Moulton's Point, about one o'clock, without the slightest molestation. "Several," a British letter says, "attempted to run away; and five actually took to their heels to join the Americans, but were presently brought back, and two of them were hung up *in terrorem* to the rest." The boats were all ordered back to Boston.

General Howe immediately formed his command in three lines. After reconnoitring the American works, he applied to General Gage for a re-enforcement. While waiting for it to arrive, his troops quietly dined. It proved to many a brave man his last meal.

When the intelligence of the landing of the

British troops reached Cambridge, there was suddenly great noise and confusion. The bells were rung, the drums beat to arms, and adjutants rode hurriedly from point to point, with orders for troops to march and oppose the enemy.

"Just after dinner," Chester says, "I was walking out from my lodgings quite calm and composed, and all at once the drums beat to arms, and bells rang, and a great noise in Cambridge. Captain Putnam came by on full gallop. 'What is the matter?' says I. 'Have you not heard?' 'No.' 'Why, the regulars are landing at Charlestown,' says he, 'and father says you must all meet, and march immediately to Bunker Hill to oppose the enemy.' I waited not, but ran and got my arms and ammunition, and hasted to my company (who were in the church for barracks), and found them nearly ready to march. We soon marched, with our frocks and trousers on over our other clothes (for our company is in uniform wholly blue, turned up with red), for we were loth to expose ourselves by our dress; and down we marched."

AN EXACT VIEW of THE LATE BATTLE AT CHARLESTOWN June 17th 1775

To which an advanced party of about 700 Provincials stood an Attack made by 11 Regiments & a Train of Artillery after an Engagement of two hours thereabouts The Rebels Many of C
Leaving Above Hundred of their Dead & Killed and Wounded upon the Field

III.

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL. THE BURNING OF CHARLESTOWN. THE RETREAT OF THE AMERICANS.

ABOUT two o'clock in the afternoon intense anxiety prevailed at the intrenchments on Breed's Hill. The patriot band who raised them had witnessed the brilliant landing of the British veterans, and the return of the barges to Boston. They saw troops again filling the boats, and felt, not without apprehension, that a battle was inevitable. They knew the contest would be an unequal one, — that of raw militia against the far-famed regulars, — and they grew impatient for the promised re-enforcements. But no signs appeared that additional troops were on the way to support them. Teams were impressed to carry on provisions; barrels of beer arrived; but the supply of refreshments that reached them was so scanty, that it served only to tantalize their wants. It is not strange, therefore, the idea was entertained that they had been rashly, if not treacherously, led into perilous position, and that they were to be left to their own resources for their defence. "The danger," Peter Brown wrote, "we were in made us think there was treachery, and that we were

brought here to be all slain. And I must and will venture to say there was treachery, oversight, or presumption in the conduct of our officers."

This idea, however, must have been dispelled, as characters who had long been identified with the patriot cause, who were widely known and widely beloved, appeared on the field to share their perils, and assured them that aid was at hand.

General Pomeroy, a veteran of the French wars, as brave as he was patriotic, asked of Ward a horse to take him to the field; and one was supplied. On his arrival at the Neck, he declined to expose the horse to the severe fire that raked it, and coolly walked across. He joined the force, gun in hand, at the rail-fence, and was welcomed by cheers.

James Otis was on the field. He was an invalid, stopping at Watertown with James Warren, subsequently the President of the Provincial Congress, who married his sister Mercy. He, who had so nobly served his country with his pen and in the council, could not resist an impulse to aid it in the field. "Your brother," Warren, on the 18th of June, wrote to his wife, "borrowed a gun, &c.," and went among the flying bullets at Charlestown, and returned last evening at ten o'clock." It is not possible to say at what time he arrived, or where he fought.

General Warren was at Cambridge, in the

Hastings House, near the College, attending a meeting of the Committee of Safety. He declared his purpose of joining the men in the redoubt. To the affectionate remonstrance of Elbridge Gerry, he replied, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," — "It is sweet and becoming to die for the country." "The ardor of dear Dr. Warren," wrote William Williams, June 20, "could not be restrained by the entreaty of his brethren of the Congress." He mounted a horse, and, in company with Dr. Townsend, one of his students, set out for Charlestown. Townsend soon left him, and he overtook James Swan and James Winthrop, who were walking to the field of battle. Exchanging salutations, he passed on and came within the range of batteries at the Neck. Here he left his horse and walked up Bunker Hill, where one of his students, William Eustis, subsequently governor, served on this day as surgeon; and thence down the hill to the rail-fence. Here he met Putnam, who offered to receive orders from him. But Warren replied, "I am here only as a volunteer. I know nothing of your dispositions; nor will I interfere with them. Tell me where I can be most useful." Putnam directed him to the redoubt, with the remark, "There you will be covered." When Warren said, "Don't think I came to seek a place of safety, but tell me where the onset will be most furious." Putnam named

the redoubt. Warren then went to the redoubt. He was enthusiastically received. "All the men huzzaed." He said that he came to encourage a good cause, and that a re-enforcement of two thousand men was on its way to their support. Prescott asked Warren if he had any orders to give; who replied that he had none, saying, "The command is yours." This is the relation by Heath. Judge Prescott is more circumstantial. "General Warren," he says, "came to the redoubt, a short time before the action commenced, with a musket in his hand. Colonel Prescott went to him, and proposed that he should take the command; observing that he (Prescott) understood he (Warren) had been appointed a major-general, a day or two before, by the Provincial Congress. General Warren replied, "I shall take no command here. I have not yet received my commission. I came as a volunteer, with my musket, to serve under you, and shall be happy to learn from a soldier of your experience." He was obeying the call of duty.

General Putnam, who had the confidence of the army, again rode on, about this time, with the intention of remaining to share their labors and peril. He continued in Charlestown through the afternoon, giving orders to re-enforcements as they arrived on the field, cheering and animating the men, and rendering valuable service.

The movements of the British along the margin

of Mystic River indicated an intention of flanking the Americans, and of surrounding the redoubt. To prevent this, Colonel Prescott ordered the artillery, with two field-pieces, and Captain Knowlton, with the Connecticut troops, to leave the intrenchments, march down the hill, and oppose the enemy's right wing. Captain Knowlton took a position six hundred feet in the rear of the redoubt, near the base of Bunker Hill, behind a fence, one half of which was stone, with two rails of wood. He then made, a little distance in front of this, another parallel line of fence, and filled the space between them with the newly cut grass lying in the fields. This line runs through the new burial-ground, nearly on a line with Elm Street. While Captain Knowlton's party was doing this, between two and three o'clock, Colonel Stark, with his regiment, arrived at the Neck, which was then enfiladed by a galling fire from the enemy's ships and batteries. Captain Dearborn, who was by the side of the Colonel, suggested to him the expediency of quickening his step across; but Stark replied, "One fresh man in action is worth ten fatigued ones," and marched steadily over. General Putnam ordered part of these troops to labor on the works begun on Bunker Hill, while Colonel Stark, after an animated address to his men, led the remainder to the position Captain Knowlton had taken, and

they aided in extending the line of the fence breastwork to the water's edge, by throwing up a stone-wall on the beach. Colonel Reed left the Neck, and marched over Bunker Hill, and took position near Colonel Stark, at the rail-fence.

The defences of the Americans, at three in the afternoon, were still in a rude, unfinished state. The redoubt on the spot where the monument stands was about eight rods square. Its strongest side, the front, facing the settled part of the town, was made with projecting angles, and protected the south side of the hill. The eastern side commanded an extensive field. The north side had an open passage-way. A breastwork, beginning a short distance from the redoubt, and on a line with its eastern side, extended about one hundred yards north towards a slough. A sally-port, between the south end of the breastwork and the redoubt, was protected by a blind. These works were raised about six feet from the level of the ground, and had platforms of wood, or steps made of earth, for the men to stand on when they should fire. The rail-fence has been already described. Its south corner was about two hundred yards, on a diagonal line, in the rear of the north corner of the breastwork. This line was slightly protected; a part of it, however, — about one hundred yards, — between the slough and the rail-fence, was open to the approach of infantry. It was the weakest

part of the defences. On the right of the redoubt, along a cart-way, a fence was made similar to the one on the left. The redoubt and breastwork constituted a good defence against cannon and musketry, but the fences were hardly more than the shadow of protection.

These defences were lined nearly in the following manner: The original detachment, under Colonel Prescott, except the Connecticut troops, were at the redoubt and breastwork. They were joined, just previous to the action, by portions of Massachusetts regiments, under Colonels Brewer, Nixon, Woodbridge, Little, and Major Moore, and one company of artillery, — Callender's. Captain Gridley's artillery company, after discharging a few ineffectual shots from a corner of the redoubt towards Copp's Hill, moved to the exposed position between the breastwork and rail-fence, where it was joined by the other artillery company, under Captain Callender. Perkins's company, of Little's regiment, and a few other troops, Captain Nutting's company — recalled from Charlestown after the British landed — and part of Warner's company, lined the cart-way on the right of the redoubt. The Connecticut troops, under Captain Knowlton, the New Hampshire forces, under Colonels Stark and Reed, and a few Massachusetts troops, were at the rail-fence. General Putnam was here when the action commenced. Three companies — Captain

Wheeler's, of Doolittle's regiment, Captain Crosby's, of Reed's regiment, and a company from Woodbridge's regiment — were stationed in Main Street, at the base of Breed's Hill, and constituted the extreme right of the Americans. Though this statement may be in the main correct, yet such is the lack of precision in the authorities, that accuracy cannot be arrived at. The Massachusetts re-enforcements, as they came on to the field, appear to have marched to the redoubt, and were directed to take the most advantageous positions. In doing this, parts of regiments, and even companies that came on together, broke their ranks, divided, and subsequently fought in various parts of the field in platoons or as individuals, rather than under regular commands.

Meantime, the main body of the British troops, in brilliant array at Moulton's Point, waited quietly for the arrival of the re-enforcements. It was nearly three o'clock when the barges returned. They landed at the Old Battery and at Mardlin's shipyard, near the entrance to the Navy Yard, the 47th Regiment, the first battalion of marines, and several companies of grenadiers and light-infantry. The most of them marched directly towards the redoubt. There had now landed about three thousand troops.

General Howe, just previous to the action, addressed his army in the following manner: —

"Gentlemen, — I am very happy in having the honor of commanding so fine a body of men: I do not in the least doubt but that you will behave like Englishmen, and as becometh good soldiers.

"If the enemy will not come from their intrenchments, we must drive them out, at all events, otherwise the town of Boston will be set on fire by them.

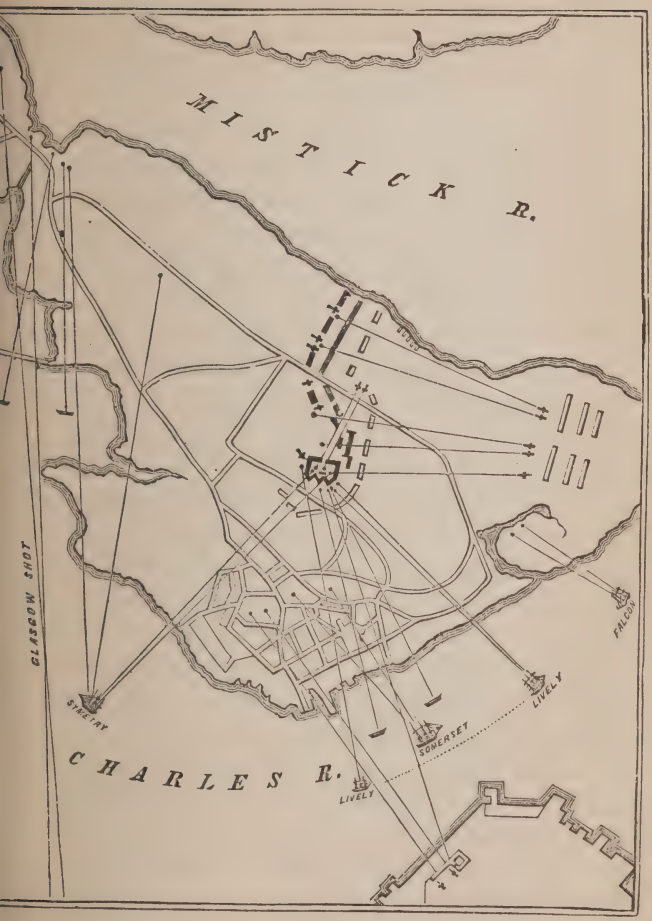
"I shall not desire one of you to go a step farther than where I go myself at your head.

"Remember, gentlemen, we have no recourse to any resources if we lose Boston, but to go on board our ships, which will be very disagreeable to us all."

Before General Howe moved from his first position, he sent out strong flank guards, and directed his field-pieces to play on the American lines. The fire from Copp's Hill, from the ships, and from the batteries, now centred on the intrenchments. "A furious cannonade," Heath writes, "and throwing of shells took place at the lines on Boston Neck against Roxbury, with intent to burn that town; but although several shells fell among the houses, and some carcasses near them, and the balls went through some, one man only was killed." The fire upon the lines was but feebly returned from Gridley's and Callender's field-pieces. Gridley's guns were soon disabled, and he drew them to the rear. Captain Callender,

alleging that his cartridges were too large for his pieces, withdrew to Bunker Hill. Here he met Putnam, who ordered him to return. Callender returned; but soon left his post, and was deserted by his men. About this time, Captain Ford's company, of Bridge's regiment, came on to the field, and, at the pressing request of Putnam, drew the deserted pieces to the rail-fence. The gunner had quitted his post, but Putnam fired four guns. Meantime Prescott detached Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson and Major Woods, each with a party, to flank the enemy. Both behaved with courage and prudence. No details, however, are given of their service. Captain Walker, with a few men, probably of one of these parties, met with the British near the Navy Yard, and fired from the cover of buildings and fences. On being driven in, he passed with a few of the party to their right flank, along the margin of Mystic River, where he was wounded and taken prisoner. The greater part of his men, under a heavy fire, succeeded in regaining the redoubt.

The general discharge of artillery was intended to cover the advance of the British columns. They moved forward in two divisions, — General Howe with the right wing, to penetrate the line at the rail-fence, and cut off a retreat from the redoubt; General Pigot with the left wing, to storm the breastwork and redoubt. "The assault," Stedman


MISTICK R.
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SOMERSET
LIVELY
LIVELY
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says, "was made on the whole front." The artillery, after playing a short time, ceased, and General Howe was told that twelve-pound balls had been sent with which to load six-pounders, when he ordered the pieces to be charged with grape. "The wretched blunder," a British writer says, "of the over-sized balls sprung from the dotage of an officer of rank in that corps, who spends his whole time in dallying with the school-master's daughters."

In advancing, however, the artillery was soon impeded by the miry ground at the base of the hill, and took post near the brick-kilns, whence its balls produced but little effect. The troops moved forward slowly; for they were burdened with knapsacks full of provisions, obstructed by the tall grass and the fences, and heated by a burning sun. "These posts and rails," a British writer says, "were too strong for the columns to push down; and the march was so retarded by the getting over them, that the next morning they were found studded with bullets, not a hand's-breadth from each other." But they felt unbounded confidence in their strength, regarded their antagonists with scorn, and expected an easy victory. One of them says: "'Let us take the bull by the horns,' was the phrase of some great men among us, as we marched on."

The Americans coolly waited their approach.

Their officers ordered them to reserve their fire until the British were within ten or twelve rods, and then to wait until the word was given. "Powder is scarce, and must not be wasted," they said; "fire low;" "aim at the waistbands;" "wait until you see the white of their eyes;" "aim at the handsome coats;" "pick off the commanders."

General Pigot's division consisted of the 5th, 38th, 43d, 47th, 52d Regiments, and the Marines, under Major Pitcairn. The 38th first took a position behind a stone-wall. Being joined by the 5th, they marched up the hill. The 47th and the Marines moved from the battery where they landed directly towards the redoubt. The 43d and 52d advanced in front of the breastwork. The troops kept firing as they approached the lines. "They," Prescott said, "commenced firing too soon, and generally fired over the heads of my troops; and, as they were partially covered by the works, but few were killed or wounded." When Prescott saw the enemy in motion, he went round the works to encourage the men, and assured them that the red-coats would never reach the redoubt if they would observe his directions. The advancing columns, however, having got within gun-shot, a few of the Americans could not resist the temptation to return their fire, without waiting for orders. Prescott indig-

nantly remonstrated at this disobedience, and appealed to their often-expressed confidence in him as their leader; while his officers seconded his exertions, and some ran round the top of the parapet and kicked up the guns. At length the British troops reached the prescribed distance, and the order was given to fire; when there was a simultaneous discharge from the redoubt and breastwork, that did terrible execution on the British ranks. But it was received with veteran firmness, and for a few minutes was sharply returned. The Americans, being protected by their works, suffered but little; but their murderous balls literally strewed the ground with the dead and wounded of the enemy. General Pigot was obliged to order a retreat, when the exulting shout of victory rose from the American lines. "On the left," a British writer says, "Pigot was staggered, and actually retreated by orders. Great pains have been taken to huddle up this matter."

General Howe, in the mean time, led the right wing against the rail-fence. The light-infantry moved along the shore of Mystic River, to turn the extreme left of the American line, while the grenadiers advanced directly in front. The Americans first opened on them with their field-pieces (Callender's) with great effect, some of the discharges being directed by Putnam; and when

the advancing troops deployed into line, a few, as at the redoubt, fired without waiting for the word. Putnam hastened to the spot, and threatened to cut down the next man who disobeyed. "I," Philip Johnson states, "heard him say, 'Men, you are all marksmen; don't one of you fire until you see the white of their eyes.'" "Lieutenant Dana tells me," Chester says, "he was the first man that fired, and that he did it singly and with a view to draw the enemy's fire; and he obtained his end fully, without any damage to our party." This drew the enemy's fire, which they continued with the regularity of troops on parade; but their balls passed over the heads of the Americans. At length the officers gave the word, when the fire from the American line was given with great effect. Many were marksmen, intent on cutting down the British officers; and when one was in sight, they exclaimed, "There! see that officer!" "Let us have a shot at him!" — when two or three would fire at the same moment. They used the fence as a rest for their pieces, and the bullets were true to their message. The companies were cut up with terrible severity; and so great was the carnage, that the columns, a few moments before so proud and firm in their array, were disconcerted, partly broken, and then retreated. Many of the Americans were in favor of pursuing them, and some, with exulting huzzas, jumped

over the fence for this purpose, but were prevented by the prudence of their officers. "A portion of the company," Captain Mann says, "twice passed the fence huzzaing, supposing, at the time, that we had driven the enemy."

The British are uniform in bearing testimony to the murderous effect of that fire. One says: "Our light-infantry were served up in companies against the grass fence, without being able to penetrate; indeed, how could we penetrate? Most of our grenadiers and light-infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost three-fourths, and many nine-tenths, of their men. Some had only eight and nine men a company left; some only three, four, and five." Another says: "It was found to be the strongest post that was ever occupied by any set of men."

And now moments of joy succeeded the long hours of toil, anxiety, and peril. The American volunteer saw the veterans of England fly before his fire, and felt a new confidence in himself. The result was obtained, too, with but little loss on his side. Colonel Prescott mingled freely among his troops, praised their good conduct, and congratulated them on their success. He felt confident that another attack would soon be made, and he renewed his caution to reserve the fire until he gave the command. He found his men in high spirits, and elated by the retreat. In their eyes the regulars

were no longer invincible. General Putnam rode to Bunker Hill, and to the rear of it, to urge on re-enforcements. Some had arrived at Charlestown Neck, but were deterred from crossing it by the severe fire that raked it. Portions of regiments had reached Bunker Hill, where they scattered. Colonel Gerrish was here, and confessed that he was exhausted. General Putnam endeavored to rally these troops. He used entreaty and command, and offered to lead them into action, but without much effect. It is doubtful whether any considerable re-enforcement reached the line of defence during the short interval that elapsed before a second attack was made by the British troops. Captain Chester says: "The men that went to intrenching overnight were in the warmest of the battle, and by all accounts they fought most manfully. They had got hardened to the noise of cannon; but those that came up as recruits were evidently most terribly frightened, many of them, and did not march up with that true courage that their cause ought to have inspired them with."

General Howe in a short time rallied his troops, and immediately ordered another assault. They marched in the same order as before, and continued to fire as they approached the lines. But, in addition to the previous obstacles, they were obliged to step over the bodies of their fallen countrymen. "It was surprising," a British writer says, "to see

how they would step over their dead bodies, as though they had been logs of wood." The artillery did more service on this attack. It moved along the narrow road, between the tongue of land and Breed's Hill, until within three hundred yards of the rail-fence, and nearly on a line with the breastwork, when it opened a severe fire to cover the advance of the infantry. The American officers, grown confident in the success of their manœuvre, ordered their men to withhold their fire until the enemy were within five or six rods of the works.

Charlestown, in the mean time, had been set on fire, — in the Square, by shells thrown from Copp's Hill; and in the easterly part, by a party of marines from the "Somerset." As the buildings were chiefly of wood, the conflagration spread with great rapidity. There was now one of the greatest scenes of war that can be conceived. To fill the eye, — a brilliantly appointed army advancing to the attack and storming the works, supported by co-operating ships and batteries; the blaze of the burning town, coursing whole streets, or curling up the spires of public edifices; the air above filled with clouds of dense black smoke, and the surrounding hills, fields, roofs, and steeples occupied by crowds of spectators: to fill the ear, — the shouts of the contending armies, the crash of the falling buildings, and the roar of the cannon,

mortars, and musketry: to fill the mind, — the high courage of men staking not only their lives, but their reputation, on the uncertain issue of a civil war, and the intense emotions of the near and dear connections standing in their presence; and, on the other side, the reflection that a defeat of the regulars would be a final loss to British empire in America. "I have seen many actions," writes General Jones, the colonel of the 52d Regiment, June 19, 1775, "but the solemn procession preparative to this, in embarking the troops in the boats, the order in which they rode across the harbor, their alertness in making good their landing, their instantly forming in front of the enemy and marching to action, was a grand, interesting sight to all concerned." . . . "The army that had no share in the action, the sailors on board the ships of war and transports, the inhabitants from the rising grounds, and from windows and the tops of houses, were spectators, and beheld with astonishment true British valor, . . . saw the rebels, forced from their cover, . . . leaving Charlestown in flames, when houses would no longer shelter them."

No description of this scene is more graphic than that of General Burgoyne, who witnessed the battle from Copp's Hill. He terms it "a complication of horror and importance beyond any thing that ever came to my lot to witness." "Sure I am, nothing ever has or can be more dreadfully terrible

than what was to be seen or heard at this time. The most incessant discharge of guns that ever was heard with mortal ears."

"Amazing scene! what shuddering prospects rise!
What horrors glare beneath the angry skies!
The rapid flames o'er Charlestown's height ascend, —
To heaven they reach! urged by the boisterous wind.
The mournful crash of falling domes resound,
And tottering spires with sparkles seek the ground.
One general burst of ruin reigns o'er all;
The burning city thunders to its fall!
O'er mingled noises the vast ruin sounds;
Spectators weep! earth from her centre groans!
Beneath prodigious unextinguished fires
Ill-fated Charlestown welters and expires."

In strange contrast, the day was calm and clear, — nature, in its beauty and repose, smiling serenely upon it all, as if in token of the triumphant end of the great conflict.

The burning of the town neither intimidated the Americans nor covered the attack on their lines. The wind directed the smoke so as to leave a full view of the approach of the British columns, which kept firing as they advanced. Colonels Brewer, Nixon, and Buckminster were wounded, and Major Moore was mortally wounded. In general, however, the balls of the British did but little execution, as their aim was bad, and the intrenchments protected the Americans. At length, at the prescribed distance, the fire was again given, which,

in its fatal impartiality, prostrated whole ranks of officers and men. The enemy stood the shock, and continued to advance with great spirit; but the continued stream of fire that issued from the whole American line was even more destructive than before. "The discharge," says Judge Prescott, "was simultaneous the whole length of the line, and though more destructive, as Colonel Prescott thought, than on the former assault, the enemy stood the first shock, and continued to advance and fire with great spirit; but before reaching the redoubt, the continuous, well-directed fire of the Americans compelled them to give way, and they retreated a second time, in greater disorder than before. Their officers were seen remonstrating, threatening, and even pricking and striking the soldiers, to urge them on, but in vain. Colonel Prescott spoke of it as a continued stream of fire from his whole line, from the first discharge until the retreat. The ground in front of the works was covered with the dead and wounded, — some lying within a few yards." "My God!" Putnam said, "I never saw such a carnage of the human race!"

General Howe, opposite the rail-fence, was in the hottest of it. Two of his aids, and other officers near him, were shot down, and at times he was left almost alone. A British officer says: "He was three times in the field left by himself,

so numerous were the killed and wounded about him." The British were compelled again to give way; and they retreated even in greater disorder than before, many running towards the boats. The British acknowledgments are generous: "They once ran and filled some of their boats." "Twice were they stopped, and twice returned to the charge." "It required the utmost exertion in all the officers, from the generals down to the subalterns, to repair the disorder which this hot and unexpected fire produced." "The king's troops gave way several times, and it required the utmost efforts of the generals to rally them." "A moment of the day was critical; Howe's left was staggered." The ground in front of the American works was covered with the killed and the wounded.

So long a time elapsed before the British came up again, that some of the officers thought they would not renew the attack. General Putnam was on Bunker Hill, and in the rear of it, urging forward the re-enforcements. Much delay occurred in marching these to the field. Indeed, great confusion existed at Cambridge. General Ward was not sufficiently supplied with staff-officers to bear his orders; and some were neglected, and others were given incorrectly. Henry Knox, afterwards General Knox, aided as a volunteer during the day, and was engaged in reconnoitre service. Late in the day General Ward despatched his own regi-

ment, Patterson's and Gardner's, to the battle-field. Colonel Gardner arrived on Bunker Hill, when Putnam detained a part of his regiment to labor on the works commenced there, while one company, under Captain Josiah Harris, took post at the rail-fence. Part of a regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Ward, arrived at a critical time of the battle. Other regiments, from various causes, failed to reach the lines. Major Gridley, of the artillery, inadequate to his position, with part of the battalion, marched a short distance on Cambridge road, then halted, and resolved to cover the retreat, which he thought to be inevitable. Colonel Frye, fresh from the battle, urged him forward; but Gridley, appalled by the horrors of the scene, ordered his men to fire at the "Glasgow," and batteries from Cobble Hill. He also ordered Colonel Mansfield to support him with his regiment, who, violating his orders, obeyed. Captain Trevett, however, disobeyed his superior, led his company, with two field-pieces, to Bunker Hill, where he lost one of them, but drew the other to the rail-fence. Colonel Scammans was ordered to go where the fighting was, and went to Lechmere's Point. Here he was ordered to march to the hill, which he understood to mean Cobble Hill, whence he sent a messenger to General Putnam to inquire whether his regiment was wanted. This delay prevented it from reaching the field in season to

do any good. A part of Gerrish's regiment, under Mighil, marched from Cambridge to Ploughed Hill, where Adjutant Christian Febiger, a gallant Danish soldier who had seen service, took the command, called upon the men to follow him, and reached the heights in season to render valuable service. Three additional Connecticut companies, at least, under Captains Chester, Clark, and Coit, arrived in time to take part in the battle; as did also Major Durkee, an old comrade of General Putnam. Captain Chester marched on near the close of the engagement, while the British were coming up the third time. Three regiments were near him when he left Cambridge, which hastened forward in advance of his company; but when Chester overtook them, at Bunker Hill, there was hardly a company in any kind of order. The men had scattered behind rocks, hay-cocks, and apple-trees. Parties, also, were continually retreating from the field; some alleging they had left the fort with leave because they had been all night and day on fatigue without sleep or refreshment; some that they had no officers to lead them; frequently, twenty were about a wounded man, when not a quarter part could touch him to advantage; while others were going off without any excuse. Chester obliged one company, rank and file, to return to the lines. Lieutenant Webb writes: "We met many of our worthy friends, wounded, sweltering

in their blood, carried on the shoulders by their fellow-soldiers. Judge you what must be our feelings at this shocking spectacle; the orders were, *press on*, *press on*, our brethren are suffering, and will be cut off."

While such was the confusion on Bunker Hill, good order prevailed at the redoubt. Colonel Prescott remained at his post, determined in his purpose, undaunted in his bearing, inspiring his command with hope and confidence, and yet chagrined, that, in this hour of peril and glory, adequate support had not reached him. He passed round the lines to encourage his men, and assured them that if the British were once more driven back they could not be rallied again. His men cheered him as they replied, "We are ready for the red-coats again!" But his worst apprehensions, as to ammunition, were realized as the report was made to him that a few artillery cartridges constituted the whole stock of powder on hand. He ordered them to be opened, and the powder to be distributed. He charged his soldiers "not to waste a kernel of it, but to make it certain that every shot should tell." He directed the few who had bayonets to be stationed at the points most likely to be scaled. These were the only preparations it was in his power to make to meet his powerful antagonist.

General Howe, exasperated at the repeated re-

pulses of his troops, resolved to make another assault. Some of his officers remonstrated against this decision, and averred that it would be downright butchery to lead the men on again; but British honor was at stake, and other officers preferred any sacrifice rather than suffer defeat from a collection of armed rustics. The boats were at Boston; there was no retreat: "Fight, conquer, or die!" was their repeated exclamation. A second re-enforcement of four hundred marines, under Major Small, had landed; and General Clinton, who had witnessed from Copp's Hill the discomfiture of the British veterans, and saw two regiments on the beach in confusion, threw himself into a boat, crossed the river, joined General Howe as a volunteer, and rendered essential aid in rallying the troops. "We," a British relation says, "should have been forced to retire if General Clinton had not come up with a re-enforcement of five or six hundred men." The troops had lost their confident air, appeared disheartened, and manifested great reluctance to marching up a third time. The officers at length formed them for the last desperate assault. The British general had learned to respect his enemy, and adopted a wiser mode of attack. "One error," Stedman says, was, "that instead of confining our attack to the enemy's left wing only, the assault was made on the whole front;" and he now profited by this experience.

He ordered the men to lay aside their knapsacks, to move forward in column, to reserve their fire, to rely on the bayonet, to direct their main attack on the redoubt, and to push the artillery forward to a position that would enable it to rake the breastwork. The gallant execution of these orders reversed the fortunes of the day.

General Howe, whose fine figure and gallant bearing were observed at the American lines, led the grenadiers and light-infantry in front of the breastwork, while Generals Clinton and Pigot led the extreme left of the troops to scale the redoubt. A demonstration only was made against the rail-fence. A party of Americans occupied a few houses and barns that had escaped the conflagration on the acclivity of Breed's Hill, and feebly annoyed the advancing columns. They, in return, only discharged a few scattering guns as they marched forward. On their right the artillery soon gained its appointed station, enfiladed the line of the breastwork, drove its defenders into the redoubt for protection, and did much execution within it by sending its balls through the passage-way. All this did not escape the keen and anxious eye of Prescott. When he saw the new dispositions of his antagonist, the artillery wheeling into its murderous position, and the columns withholding their fire, he well understood his intention to concentrate his whole force on the redoubt, and believed

that it must inevitably be carried. He thought, however, that duty, honor, and the interest of the country, required that it should be defended to the last extremity, although at a certain sacrifice of many lives. In this trying moment, he continued to give his orders coolly. Most of his men had remaining only one round of ammunition, and few more than three rounds; and he directed them to reserve their fire until the British were within twenty yards. At this distance a deadly volley was poured upon the advancing columns, which made them waver for an instant; but they sprang forward without returning it. The American fire soon slackened for want of means, while the columns of Clinton and Pigot reached a position on the southern and eastern sides of the redoubt, where they were protected by its walls. It was now attacked on three sides at once. Prescott ordered those who had no bayonets to retire to the back part of it, and fire on the enemy as they showed themselves on the parapet. A soldier of noble bearing mounted the southern side, and had barely shouted, "The day is ours!" when he was shot down, and the whole front rank shared his fate. At this time Major Pitcairn fell. Major Tupper then took the command, and pressed on towards the redoubt. Young Richardson, of the Royal Irish, was the first to mount the parapet. The remains of the grenadiers of the 63d Regiment were the first that

entered the redoubt. After Captain Horsford had been wounded, and Lieutenant Dalrymple had been killed, a sergeant took the command, made a speech to the few men left, saying, "We must either conquer or die," and entered the works.

But the defenders had spent their ammunition, — another cannon cartridge furnishing the powder for the last muskets that were fired. Its substitute, stones, revealed their weakness, and filled the enemy with hope. The redoubt was soon successfully scaled. General Pigot, by the aid of a tree, mounted a corner of it, and was closely followed by his men, when one side of it literally bristled with bayonets. The conflict was now carried on hand to hand. Many stood and received wounds with swords and bayonets. But the British continued to enter, and were advancing towards the Americans, when Prescott gave the order to retreat.

When the Americans left the redoubt, the dust arising from the dry, loose dirt was so great that the outlet was hardly visible. Some ran over the top, and others hewed their way through the enemy's ranks. Prescott, among the last to leave, was surrounded by the British, who made passes at him with the bayonet, which he skilfully parried with his sword. "He did not run, but stepped long, with his sword up," escaping unharmed, though his banyan and waistcoat were pierced in

several places. The retiring troops passed between two divisions of the British, one of which had turned the north-eastern end of the breastwork, and the other had come round the angle of the redoubt; but they were too much exhausted to use the bayonet effectually, and the combatants, for fifteen or twenty rods from the redoubt, were so mingled together that firing would have destroyed friend and foe. The British, with cheers, took possession of the works, but immediately formed, and delivered a destructive fire upon the retreating troops. Warren, at this period, was killed, and left on the field; Gridley was wounded; Bridge was again wounded; and the loss of the Americans was greater than at any previous period of the action. Colonel Gardner, leading on a part of his regiment, was descending Bunker Hill, when he received his death-wound. Still his men, under Major Jackson, pressed forward, and, with Cushing's, Smith's, and Washburn's companies of Ward's regiment, and Febiger's party of Gerrish's regiment, poured between Breed's and Bunker Hill a well-directed fire upon the enemy, and gallantly covered their retreat.

In the mean time, the Americans at the rail-fence, under Stark, Reed, and Knowlton, re-enforced by Clark's, Coit's, and Chester's Connecticut companies, Captain Harris's company of Gardner's regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Ward, and a few troops,

maintained their ground with great firmness and intrepidity, and successfully resisted every attempt to turn their flank. This line, indeed, was nobly defended. The force here did a great service, for it saved the main body, who were retreating in disorder from the redoubt, from being cut off by the enemy. When it was perceived at the rail-fence that the force under Colonel Prescott had left the hill, these brave men "gave ground, but with more regularity than could have been expected of troops who had been no longer under discipline, and many of whom never before saw an engagement." The whole body of Americans were now in full retreat, the greater part over the top of Bunker Hill.

The brow of Bunker Hill was a place of great slaughter. General Putnam here rode to the rear of the retreating troops, and, regardless of the balls flying about him, with his sword drawn, and still undaunted in his bearing, urged them to renew the fight in the unfinished works. "Make a stand here," he exclaimed; "we can stop them yet!" "In God's name, form, and give them one shot more!" It was here that he stood by an artillery piece until the enemy's bayonets were almost upon him. The veteran Pomeroy, too, with his shattered musket in his hand, and his face to the foe, endeavored to rally the men. It was not possible, however, to check the retreat. Captain Trevett and a few of his men, with great difficulty and great gallantry, drew off the only field-piece that

was saved of the six that were in the action. Colonel Scammans, with part of his regiment, and Captain Foster's artillery company, on their way to the field of battle, reached the top of Bunker Hill, but immediately retreated. The whole body retired over the Neck, amidst the shot from the enemy's ships and batteries, and were met by additional troops on their way to the heights. Among them Major Brooks, with two remaining companies of Bridge's regiment. One piece of cannon at the Neck opened on the enemy, and covered the retreat.

The British troops, about five o'clock, with a parade of triumph, took possession of the same hill that had served them for a retreat on the memorable 19th of April. General Howe was here advised by General Clinton to follow up his success by an immediate attack on Cambridge. But the reception he had met made the British commander cautious, if not timid; and he only fired two field-pieces upon the Americans, who retreated to Winter Hill, Prospect Hill, and Cambridge. Similar apprehensions were entertained on both sides respecting a renewal of the attack: the Americans at Winter and Prospect Hills lay on their arms, while the British, re-enforced by additional troops from Boston, threw up during the night a line of breastwork on the northern side of Bunker Hill. Both sides, however, felt indisposed to renew the action. The loss of the peninsula

damped the ardor of the Americans, and the loss of men depressed the spirit of the British.

Prescott, indignant at the absence of support when victory was within his grasp, repaired to head-quarters, reported the issue of the battle, already too well known, and received the thanks of the Commander-in-chief. He found General Ward under great apprehensions lest the enemy, encouraged by success, should advance on Cambridge, where he had neither disciplined troops nor an adequate supply of ammunition to receive him. Prescott, however, assured him that the confidence of the British would not be increased by the result of the battle; he always thought he could have maintained his post with the handful of men under his command, exhausted as they were by fatigue and hunger, if they had been supplied with sufficient ammunition and with bayonets; and he offered to retake the hill that night, or perish in the attempt, if three regiments of fifteen hundred men, well equipped with ammunition and bayonets, were put under his command. Ward wisely decided that the condition of his army would not justify so bold a measure. Nor was it needed to fill the measure of Prescott's fame. "He had not yet done enough to satisfy himself, though he had done enough to satisfy his country. He had not, indeed, secured final victory, but he had secured a glorious immortality."

IV.

CHARACTER OF THE BATTLE. THE QUESTION OF COMMAND. PRESCOTT. PUTNAM. WARREN. POMEROY.

THE battle of Bunker Hill is remarkable on many accounts, — in being the first great battle of the revolutionary contest; in the astonishing resistance made by inexperienced militia against veteran troops; in the affecting character of its prominent incidents; in the sublimity of its spectacle; and in its influence on the fortunes of the war. It proved the quality of the American soldier. It was a victory, with all the moral effect of victory, under the name of a defeat. And yet, at first, it was regarded with disappointment, and even with indignation; and contemporary accounts of it, whether private or official, are rather in the tone of apology, or of censure, than of exultation. The enterprise, on the whole, was pronounced rash in the conception and discreditable in the execution. A severe scrutiny was instituted into the conduct of those who were charged with having contributed by their backwardness to the result. No one, for years, came forward to claim the honor of having directed it; no notice was taken of its returning anniversary; and no narrative did justice

to the regiments that were engaged, or to the officers who were in command. The bravery, however, of those who fought it was so resolute, and their self-devotion was so lofty, as at once to elicit, from all quarters, the most glowing commendation, and to become the theme of the poet and the orator. "To a mind," said Governor Johnstone, in the House of Commons, "who loves to contemplate the glorious spirit of freedom, no spectacle can be more affecting than the action at Bunker's Hill. To see an irregular peasantry, commanded by a physician, inferior in number, opposed by every circumstance of cannon and bombs that could terrify timid minds, calmly wait the attack of the gallant Howe, leading on the best troops in the world, with an excellent train of artillery, and twice repulsing those very troops, who had often chased the chosen battalions of France, and at last retiring for want of ammunition, but in so respectable a manner that they were not even pursued, — who can reflect on such scenes, and not adore the constitution of government which could breed such men!"

As time rolled on, its connection with the great movement of the age appeared in its true light. Hence the battle of Bunker Hill now stands out as the grand opening scene in the drama of the American Revolution.

It has been remarked that, in a military point of

view, it would be difficult to assign a just motive to either party for this conflict. It was not very important for the American army to hem in the British army in Boston, by a force posted so near as Bunker Hill, when that object could be accomplished by a force a little farther in the rear. While, on the other hand, if the British officers had nothing else in view but to dislodge the occupants of Breed's Hill, it was perfectly competent for them, as they commanded the Mystic and the Charles Rivers, to cut off all communication, and to reduce Prescott and his men to famine. The truth is, both parties were ready and anxious and determined to try the strength of their arms. The Americans felt confident in their ability at least to prevent another excursion into the country. On the other hand, British pride was touched by this exultation and daring, and by the reflection that predictions as to the courage of the Americans and the invincibility of the regulars had been so completely falsified. Two regiments — it had been written — were sufficient to beat the whole strength of the province ; and a force of five thousand was sufficient to overrun the whole of the colonies. Never had high-sounding manifesto been followed by such mortifying results. The veterans who were expected to make this triumphal march were so closely blockaded, by the force that was pronounced so impotent and was so despised, that their luxuri-

ous fare was suddenly changed into salt provision. Thus their daily food stimulated their desire for retaliation. Besides, the army was sent over to bring the Americans to a sense of their duty, and it longed to give them one good drubbing as a necessary step towards it. When, therefore, the British officers saw the redoubt, and saw it filled with its daring band, they could not permit that it should "stand in their very face, and defy them to their teeth." Without calculating the cost, or without caring for it, their object was to destroy the works at once, by the power of the royal army, and to take vengeance, as well as to attain security.

The reason for issuing the order to fortify Bunker Hill has been stated. The Council of War had decided not to occupy so exposed a post until the army was better prepared to defend it. But when it was certainly known that the enemy had determined to move into the country, the Committee of Safety, with that disregard of consequences which characterizes so remarkably the early stage of the revolutionary struggle, advised that this movement should be anticipated. The decision has been pronounced rash. It was followed by desolation and carnage. Much precious blood was shed. Even the "beauty of Israel fell upon his high places." This daring decision, however, was productive of consequences of the highest importance, which a

less terrible ordeal would scarcely have produced. They extended throughout the war. "The resolution," General Wilkinson says, "displayed by the provincials on this memorable day produced effects auspicious to the American cause, and coextensive with the war; for, although compelled by superior numbers to yield the ground, the obstinacy of their resistance put an end to that confidence with which they had been first attacked, and produced measures of caution bordering on timidity. There can be no doubt that we were indebted to these causes for the unmolested occupancy of our position before Boston." . . . "To the cool courage and obstinacy displayed on the occasion, and the moral influence of the bloody lesson which Sir William Howe received on that day, we must ascribe the military phenomenon of a motley band of undisciplined American yeomanry, scarcely superior in number, holding an army of British veterans in close siege for nine months; and hence it might fairly be inferred that our independence was essentially promoted by the consequence of this single battle."

General Lee, also a soldier of the Revolution, says: "The sad and impressive experience of this murderous day sunk deep into the mind of Sir William Howe; and it seems to have had its influence on all its subsequent operations, with decisive control."

One of the more immediate of its results — the great political service of the battle — was to promote a state of general hostility. This already existed in Massachusetts, where war, and nothing short of war, had been fully resolved upon; but it did not exist in some of the other colonies, where the spirit raised by the Lexington alarm had softened into a desire of reconciliation. How different, for instance, was the state of things in New York, where the same military companies were directed by the Provincial Congress to escort, on the same day, General Washington to the seat of war, and Governor Tryon to the seat of power! But after it had been demonstrated that the New England militia had stood the attack of the British regulars, and had twice repulsed them, after Warren had fallen, and Charlestown had been destroyed, affairs changed their aspect. New confidence was felt in the American arms. There were new justifying causes for open war. The other colonies became arrayed in hostility, side by side, with Massachusetts. And it was certain that peace could never be established between the two countries, except on the basis of an acknowledgment of American independence!

The commanding officers felt that the army was not prepared for such a conflict. The want of subordination and discipline rendered efficient military command impossible, and hence the proceed-

ings throughout the day were characterized by great confusion. The evidence on this point, early and late, is uniform and decisive, and it relates both to transactions at Cambridge and at Charlestown. During the battle the influence of Colonel Prescott over his men preserved order at his position. Says Captain Bancroft, who was in the redoubt, "He continued through the hottest of the fight to display admirable coolness, and a self-possession that would do honor to the greatest hero of any age. He gave his orders deliberately, and how effectually they were obeyed I need not tell." But in other parts of the field the troops fought rather in platoons, or individually, — companies entirely losing their order, — than under regular commands; and in some instances, where superior officers attempted to exercise authority, their orders were openly disregarded. Even the orders of General Ward were but feebly carried into effect. Much of this delinquency must be placed at the door of inefficiency on the part of some of the officers; but much of it also must be ascribed to an absence of the principle of subordination, from the generals to the lower officers. The prompt action of Connecticut, relative to a commander-in-chief, shows that the evil was felt in its full force.

It is from this cause — the want of subordination, and the confusion — that it is a question

whether there was a general authorized commander in the battle. Had the army been fully organized, and had the rank of the officers been established, such a question could not have arisen. It is not one of recent origin, for there was the same perplexity on this point, immediately after the battle, that exists now; and inquiries in relation to it elicited equally unsatisfactory answers. The Orderly Book of General Ward not only is silent on it, but contains no orders for the conduct of the enterprise. Nor is this deficiency entirely supplied by any contemporary document. Yet it is from authorities of this character that a correct conclusion must be drawn.

The conclusion warranted by the evidence is, that the original detachment was placed under the orders of Colonel Prescott, and that no general officer was authorized to command over him during the battle. He was detached on a special service, and he faithfully executed his orders. He filled at the redoubt the most important post, the duty of a commanding officer, from the hour that ground was broken until it was abandoned. He detached guards to the shores, directed the labor of the works, called councils of war, made applications to General Ward for re-enforcements, posted his men for action, fought with them until resistance was unavailing, and gave the order to retreat. General officers came to this position; but they did not

give him an order, nor interfere with his dispositions. When General Warren, for instance, entered the redoubt, Colonel Prescott tendered to him the command; but Warren replied that he had not received his commission, and should serve as a volunteer. "I shall be happy," he said, "to learn from a soldier of your experience." Colonel Prescott, therefore, was left in uncontrolled possession of his post. Nor is there any proof that he gave an order at the rail-fence, or on Bunker Hill. But he remained at the redoubt, and there fought the battle with such coolness, bravery, and discretion, as to win the unbounded applause of his contemporaries, and to deserve, through all time, the admiration of his countrymen.

General Putnam exhibited throughout the bravery and generous devotion that formed a part of his nature. Though of limited education, fiery and rough in speech, he was a true patriot, and a fine executive officer. He was in command of the Connecticut troops stationed in Cambridge, and shared with them the peril and glory of this remarkable day. In a regularly organized army his appearance on the field, by virtue of his rank, would have given him the command. But it was an army of allies, whose jealousies had not yielded to the vital principle of subordination; and he was present rather as the patriotic volunteer than as the authorized general commander. He exercised

an important agency in the battle. He was received as a welcome counsellor, both at the laying out of the works and during the morning of the engagement. Besides being in the hottest of the action at the rail-fence and on Bunker Hill, — fighting, beyond a question, with daring intrepidity, — he was applied to for orders by the re-enforcements that reached the field, and he gave orders without being applied to. Some of the officers not under his immediate command respected his authority, while others refused to obey him. But no service was more brilliant than that of the Connecticut troops, and they said: "He acts nobly in every thing." That he was not as successful in leading the Massachusetts troops into action ought, in justice, to be ascribed neither to his lack of energy nor of conduct, but to the hesitancy of inexperienced troops, to the want of spirit in their officers, and to the absence of subordination and discipline in the army. He did not give an order to Colonel Prescott, nor was he in the redoubt during the action.

General Warren exerted great influence in the battle. Having served zealously and honorably in the incipient councils that put in motion the machinery of the Revolution, he had decided to devote his energies to promote it in its future battle-fields. He was accordingly elected major-general on the 14th of June, but had not received his commission on the day of the battle.

He mingled in the fight, behaved with great bravery, and was among the last to leave the redoubt. He was lingering, even to rashness, in his retreat. He had proceeded but a few rods, when a ball struck him in the forehead, and he fell to the ground. On the next day, visitors to the battle-field — among them Dr. Jeffries and young Winslow, afterwards General Winslow, of Boston — recognized his body, and it was buried on the spot where he fell. After the British had left Boston, the sacred remains were sought after, and again identified. In April they were re-interred, with appropriate ceremonies, when Perez Morton delivered a eulogy.

The intelligence of his death spread a gloom over the country. The many allusions to him, in contemporary letters and in the journals, indicate how strong a hold he had on the affections of his countrymen. "The ardor of dear Dr. Warren," says one, "could not be restrained by the entreaty of his brethren of the Congress, and he is, alas, among the slain! May eternal happiness be his eternal portion." Mrs. Adams, July 5, writes: "Not all the havoc and devastation they have made has wounded me like the death of Warren. We want him in the senate; we want him in his profession; we want him in the field. We mourn for the citizen, the senator, the physician, and the warrior." General Howe could hardly credit the

report that the president of Congress was among the killed; and when assured of it by Dr. Jeffries, he is said to have declared that this victim was worth five hundred of their men. Nor was his death known for a certainty at Cambridge until a few days after the battle. On the 19th of June, the vote of the Provincial Congress, in assigning a time to choose his successor, says he was "supposed to be killed."

Eloquence and song, the good and the great, have united in eulogy on this illustrious patriot and early martyr to the cause of the freedom of America. No one personified more completely the fine enthusiasm and the self-sacrificing patriotism that first rallied to its support. No one was more widely beloved, or was more highly valued. The language of the Committee of Safety, who knew his character, and appreciated his service, though brief, is full, touching, and prophetic: "Among the dead was Major-General Joseph Warren; a man whose memory will be endeared to his countrymen, and to the worthy in every part and age of the world, so long as virtue and valor shall be esteemed among mankind."

General Seth Pomeroy behaved so well in the battle, that in some of the accounts he is assigned a separate command. He served as a volunteer. He fought with great spirit, and kept with the troops until the retreat. His musket was shattered

by a ball, but he retained it, and with it continued to animate the men. He thought it strange that Warren, "the young and chivalrous soldier," says Colonel Swett, "the eloquent and enlightened legislator, should fall, and he escape, old and useless, unhurt." Soon after the battle, he declined, on account of age, the appointment as first brigadier-general of the army, but as colonel commanded a regiment in the Jerseys. His exposure brought on pleurisy, and he died at Peekskill, New York.

V.

SERVICES OF THE REGIMENTS. NOTICES OF THE OFFICERS. NUMBERS ENGAGED. BRITISH CRITICISM. DESTRUCTION OF CHARLESTOWN.

IT is difficult to assign with precision the credit due to the American regiments engaged in the Bunker Hill battle. None of the early accounts mention them in detail. No official report specifies the service they performed. And the only guide, in the printed material of 1775, is a list of the killed and wounded of each regiment, that appeared in a Providence newspaper. The official returns of the army, previous to June 17, are very imperfect, while those of a later date contain names of soldiers not in the action.

William Prescott's regiment, from Middlesex, was commissioned May 26, and a return of this date is the latest, before the battle, I have seen. Its lieutenant-colonel, John Robinson, and its major, Henry Wood, behaved with great coolness and bravery. Its adjutant, William Green, was wounded. Captains Maxwell and Farwell were badly wounded; and Lieutenants Faucett and Brown were wounded, — the former mortally, and was left in the hands of the enemy. Lieutenant

Prescott, a nephew of the colonel, and probably of this regiment, received a ball in the arm, but continued to load his musket, and was passing by the sally-port to discharge it when a cannon-shot cut him in pieces. A company of fifty-nine men from Hollis, New Hampshire, under Captain Reuben Dow, was commissioned May 19. They worked all the night of the 16th, fought bravely the next day. Eight were killed.

James Frye's regiment, from Essex, was commissioned May 20. James Bricket was lieutenant-colonel; Thomas Poor, major; Daniel Hardy, adjutant; Thomas Kittredge, surgeon. Frye did not go with his regiment on the 16th, on account of indisposition; but was in the battle, and behaved with spirit. Bricket, a physician, was wounded, went to Bunker Hill, and attended the wounded. The service of a colored man, Salem Poor, elicited the declaration from fourteen officers — one of them Prescott — that he behaved like an experienced officer, and that "in his person centred a brave and gallant soldier."

Ebenezer Bridge's regiment was commissioned May 27. Moses Parker was lieutenant-colonel; John Brooks, major; Joseph Fox, adjutant; John Bridge, quartermaster. A return, dated June 23, gives but nine companies belonging to it. Though the whole regiment was ordered to parade on the 16th of June, yet it is stated that three of its com-

panies did not go on under Colonel Prescott. Ford's company reached the field just before the action began; and a portion of this regiment, — two companies, — under Major Brooks, were on the way to the hill when the Americans were retreating. Colonel Bridge, though wounded on the head and in the neck by a sword-cut, and though he was one of the last to retreat, did not escape the scrutiny that took place in relation to the battle. It was charged against him that he kept too cautiously covered in the redoubt. He was tried, and acquitted on the ground of indisposition of body.

Lieutenant-Colonel Parker was a skilful and brave veteran of the French wars, and behaved with great gallantry in the action. A ball fractured his knee, and he was left in the redoubt. The British carried him a prisoner to Boston, lodged him in the jail, where, after the amputation of his leg, he died on the 4th of July, aged forty-three. He was a good officer, much beloved by his regiment, and his loss was severely felt. An obituary notice of him — in the "New England Chronicle," July 21, 1775 — says: "In him fortitude, prudence, humanity, and compassion all conspired to heighten the lustre of his military virtues;" and it states that, "through the several commissions to which his merit entitled him, he had always the pleasure to find that he possessed the esteem and respect of his soldiers, and the applause of his countrymen." The notice con-

cludes in the following strain: "God grant each individual that now is, or may be, engaged in the American army an equal magnitude of soul; so shall their names, unsullied, be transmitted in the latest catalogue of fame; and if any vestiges of liberty shall remain, their praises shall be rehearsed through the earth, 'till the sickle of time shall crop the creation.'"

Major Brooks — afterwards Governor Brooks — was not on the hill in the afternoon. His duties on this day have been stated. Captain Walker, whose daring reconnoitre service has been described, was carried to Boston, severely wounded. His leg was amputated, but he did not receive proper attention, and died during the following August. Captain Coburn's clothes were riddled with balls. Captain Bancroft fought nobly in the redoubt, and was wounded. Captain Ford behaved with much spirit.

Moses Little's regiment was not commissioned until June 26. A return, dated June 15, of nine companies, reports Captain Collins's company in Gloucester, and Captain Parker's as ready to march from Ipswich. Depositions state that, on the evening of June 16, Captains Gerrish and Perkins were at West Cambridge, and that Captain Lunt was detached to Lechmere's Point, as a guard. Captain Perkins's, Wade's, and Warner's companies were led on by Colonel Little, before the action

commenced; Captain Lunt went on near its close. Swett states that Captain Warner, who narrowly escaped, led on but twenty-three men, and that seventeen of these were either killed or wounded. Perkins marched with all possible expedition, and was of eminent service. "He fired away all his cartridges, and, having some loose powder in his pocket, he was obliged to strip and tear off some part of his shirt to make wadding of; and when he had fired away all his powder, he retreated, without hat or wig, and almost naked." Jenkins behaved with equal valor. Only forty are returned as killed and wounded of this regiment. Colonel Little is mentioned as behaving with spirit. He marched his command through two regiments who were afraid to advance, and covered the retreat. "Two men were killed, one on each side of him; and he came to the camp all bespattered with blood." Depositions state that Isaac Smith was lieutenant-colonel; —— Collins, major; and Stephen Jenkins, adjutant. The accounts of this regiment are very confused.

Ephraim Doolittle's regiment was commissioned June 12, when a return names only seven companies. The colonel and lieutenant-colonel were absent on the day of the battle, and Major Willard Moore led on, it is stated, three hundred of its men. Few details are preserved of the service of this regiment, or of the conduct of its officers. The deposi-

tions speak in glowing terms of the good qualities of Major Moore. He was a firm patriot, and a generous and chivalrous soldier. On the second attack he received a ball in the thigh, and while his men were carrying him to the rear another ball went through his body. He called for water, but none could be obtained nearer than the Neck. He lingered until the time of the retreat, when, feeling his wounds to be mortal, he requested his attendants to lay him down, leave him, and take care of themselves. He met with a soldier's death. He was from Paxton. He took a prominent part in the Worcester Convention in September, 1774; was chosen captain of the minute-men January 17, 1775; and on the Lexington alarm immediately marched for Cambridge. Few notices appear of individuals of this regiment. Robert Steele, a drummer, stated in 1825 that he "beat to 'Yankee Doodle' when he mustered for Bunker Hill on the morning of the 17th of June, 1775."

Samuel Gerrish's regiment, about which so much has been written, was neither full nor commissioned. On the 19th of May it was reported to be complete; but there were difficulties in relation to six of the companies, which were investigated June 2. Four companies were in commission June 17, and four more were commissioned June 22. Depositions station, June 16, three companies at Chelsea, three at Cambridge, and two at Sewall's Point. At a

meeting of eight captains of this regiment, June 16, at Chelsea, Loammi Baldwin was chosen lieutenant-colonel, Richard Dodge, major. Christian Febiger was adjutant, Michael Farley was quartermaster, and David Jones, surgeon. The conduct of the colonel of this regiment became the occasion of severe comment. A disparaging allusion to him occurs in Dr. Church's traitorous letter, in 1775; Wilkinson stations him on Bunker Hill, and with him all the re-enforcements that came on after Stark passed to the rail-fence; the revolutionary depositions are equally severe. A letter says: "Major Gerrish no sooner came in sight of the enemy than a tremor seized him, and he began to bellow, 'Retreat! retreat! or you'll all be cut off.'" In some of the statements, the whole regiment is also included. This, however, does gross injustice to a part of it, if not to the whole of it. Part of it went on, under its gallant adjutant, Febiger, and did good service. Of Colonel Gerrish's conduct Swett says: "A complaint was lodged against him, with Ward, immediately after the battle, who refused to notice it, on account of the unorganized state of the army. He was stationed at Sewall's Point, which was fortified; in a few weeks, a floating-battery made an attack on the place, which he did not attempt to repel, observing, 'The rascals can do us no harm, and it would be a mere waste of powder to fire at them with our four-pounders.'

It was evening, the lights were extinguished, and all the British balls flew wide of the fort. For his conduct on this occasion, and at Bunker Hill, he was arrested immediately, tried, found guilty of 'conduct unworthy an officer,' and cashiered." This was August 19, 1775. It was thought by the judge-advocate of the court that he was treated far too severely.

Adjutant Christian Febiger behaved with great gallantry in leading on a portion of this regiment in time to do efficient service. He was a Danish lieutenant, and enlisted April 28. He afterwards went with Arnold to Quebec, where he behaved with the resolution and intrepidity of a veteran, and gave many proofs of great military abilities. He was taken prisoner in the attack. He subsequently rose to the rank of colonel, and distinguished himself at the memorable storming of Stony Point, in 1779, where he led a column by the side of General Wayne.

Thomas Gardner's regiment, of Middlesex, was commissioned on the 2d of June. William Bond was lieutenant-colonel, and Michael Jackson was major. After the British landed, this regiment was stationed in the road leading to Lechmere's Point, and late in the day was ordered to Charlestown. On arriving at Bunker Hill, General Putnam ordered part of it to assist in throwing up defences commenced at this place. One company

went to the rail-fence. The greater part, under the lead of their colonel, on the third attack advanced towards the redoubt. On the way, Colonel Gardner was struck by a ball, which inflicted a mortal wound. While a party was carrying him off, he had an affecting interview with his son, a youth of nineteen, who was anxious to aid in bearing him from the field. His heroic father prohibited him, and he was borne on a litter of rails over Winter Hill. Here he was overtaken by the retreating troops. He raised himself on his rude couch, and addressed to them cheering words. He lingered until July 3, when he died. On the 5th he was buried with the honors of war. He was in his fifty-second year, and had been a member of the General Court and of the Provincial Congress. He was a true patriot, a brave soldier, and an upright man. An obituary notice of him in the "Essex Gazette," July 13, 1775, says: "From the era of our public difficulties he distinguished himself as an ardent friend to the expiring liberties of America; and by the unanimous suffrages of his townsmen was for some years elected a member of the General Assembly; but when the daring encroachments of intruding despotism deprived us of a constitutional convention, and the first law of nature demanded a substitute, he was chosen one of the Provincial Congress, — in which departments he was vigilant and indefatigable in defeating every

effort of tyranny. To promote the interest of his country was the delight of his soul. An inflexible zeal for freedom caused him to behold every engine of oppression with contempt, horror, and aversion." He devoted to military affairs not only a large share of his time, but of his fortune. His private character is highly eulogized. He was, "to his family, kind, tender, and indulgent; to his friends, unreserved and sincere; to the whole circle of his acquaintance, affable, condescending, and obliging; while veneration for religion augmented the splendor of his sister virtues."

Major Jackson had a personal encounter with a British officer, whom he killed, while he received a ball through his side. His life was preserved by his sword-belt. He was recognized by his antagonist, with whom he had served in former wars.

One of the companies of this regiment — Captain Josiah Harris's — was raised in Charlestown. Colonel Swett pays this company — the last to retreat — the following compliment: "They were fighting at their own doors, on their own natal soil. They were on the extreme left, covered by some loose stones thrown up on the shore of the Mystic, during the day, by order of Colonel Stark. At this most important pass into the country, against which the enemy made the most desperate efforts, like Leonidas's band, they had taken post, and like them they defended it till the enemy had discovered another."

General Ward's regiment, of Worcester, was commissioned May 23. Jonathan Ward was lieutenant-colonel; Edward Barnes, major; Timothy Bigelow, second major; James Hart, adjutant; William Boyd, quartermaster. This regiment was not ordered to Charlestown until late in the afternoon, and halted on its way; but a detachment from it pushed on, and arrived in season to take part in the action. Lieutenant-colonel Ward, with a few men, reached the rail-fence; and Captains Cushing and Washburn, and another company, fired upon the British after the retreat commenced from the redoubt. The remainder of the regiment, under Major Barnes, retreated before it got near enough to engage the enemy.

Jonathan Brewer's regiment, of Worcester and Middlesex, consisted, June 15, of three hundred and ninety-seven men. William Buckminster was lieutenant-colonel, and Nathaniel Cudworth major, — all of whom did excellent duty in the battle. On the same day, the Committee of Safety recommended the officers of this regiment to be commissioned, with the exception of Captain Stebbins, who did not have the requisite number of men. Swett states that this regiment went on about three hundred strong; revolutionary depositions state one hundred and fifty. It was stationed mostly on the diagonal line between the breastwork and rail-fence. Few de-

tails are given respecting Colonel Brewer, other than that he was consulted often by Prescott, behaved with spirit, and was wounded; or of Major Cudworth, — the same who led the Sudbury minute-men to attack the British troops on the 19th of April. Lieutenant-colonel Buckminster acquired much reputation for bravery and prudence in the battle. Just before the retreat, he received a dangerous wound from a musket-ball entering his right shoulder, and coming out in the middle of his back. This made him a cripple during life. He was much respected for his sterling integrity, patriotism, and goodness of heart. He was born in Framingham in 1736, removed in 1757 to Barré, was elected in 1774 to command the minute-men, and after his arrival in camp was chosen lieutenant-colonel. He died in 1786.

John Nixon's regiment, from Middlesex and Worcester, was neither full nor commissioned. Only three companies appear in a list dated June 16, and their officers are all that appear to have been in commission. Swett states that three hundred were led on to the field by Colonel Nixon, who behaved with great gallantry. He was badly wounded, and carried off the hill. A colored man, Peter Salem, it was reported, fired the shot that killed Major Pitcairn.

Benjamin R. Woodbridge's regiment, of Hampshire, also, was not commissioned, and there are

few details of it, or of its officers, in the accounts of the battle. A return, dated June 16, names eight captains, four lieutenants, four ensigns, and three hundred and sixty-three men. Abijah Brown was lieutenant-colonel, and William Stacy, major. Swett names this regiment, also, as going on three hundred strong. But in this case, and in the case of Nixon's, it is probably too high an estimate.

Asa Whitcomb's regiment, of Worcester, had but few companies in the battle. One account, by a soldier, states that Captain Benjamin Hastings, belonging to it, led on a company of thirty-four, and took post at the rail-fence. This name does not occur in a return dated June 3. Two companies, Captains Burt's and Wilder's, were probably in the battle.

James Scammans's regiment, from Maine, did not advance nearer the battle than Bunker Hill; and its colonel was tried for disobedience of orders, but acquitted. This trial was printed at length in the "New England Journal" of February, 1776. In a petition, dated November 14, 1776, he requested a commission to raise a regiment, "being willing to show his country that he was ready at all times to risk his fortune and life in defence of it." It commenced as follows: "Whereas, his conduct has been called in question respecting the battle of Charlestown, in June, 1775, wherein the dispositions made were such as could render but little prospect of success."

John Mansfield's regiment was ordered to Charlestown, but marched to Cobble Hill, to protect the detachment of artillery, under Major Scarborough Gridley. Colonel Mansfield was tried for "remissness and backwardness in the execution of his duty," sentenced "to be cashiered, and rendered unfit to serve in the Continental Army." Swett remarks that he "was obviously guilty of an error only, arising from inexperience."

Richard Gridley's battalion of artillery, notwithstanding the great exertions that had been made to complete it, was not settled at the time of the battle. It consisted of ten companies, — four hundred and seventeen men. In a return dated June 16, Scarborough Gridley, son of the colonel, is titled lieutenant-colonel, and William Burbeck, major; but the Committee of Safety of this date recommended Congress to commission the captains and subalterns of the train, and William Burbeck as lieutenant-colonel, Scarborough Gridley as first major, and David Mason as second major. But these officers were not commissioned until June 21, when Gridley was made second major. Three companies were in battle: Captain Gridley's, Trevett's, and Callender's. One other — Captain Foster's — advanced as far as Bunker Hill, when it was obliged to retreat. Details of the conduct of these companies have been given. All accounts agree that the artillery, in general, was badly served.

Colonel Richard Gridley, the chief-engineer of the army, who planned the works on Breed's Hill, was a veteran of the French wars, and distinguished himself at the siege of Louisburg. He was taken ill on the morning of the 17th, after the fatigue of the night, and left the hill; but returned before the action commenced, and fought until the retreat, aiding in discharging one of the field-pieces. He was struck, near the close of the battle, by a ball, and entered his sulky to be carried off; but, meeting with some obstruction, had but just left it, when the horse was killed, and the sulky was riddled by the enemy's shot. The veteran engineer was active in planning the fortifications that were thrown up immediately after the battle. He received from the Provincial Congress the rank of major-general; and commissioned, September 20, 1775, to take the command of the artillery in the Continental Army. In November, he was superseded by Colonel Knox. Washington, December 31, stated to Congress that no one in the army was better qualified to be chief-engineer; and his services were again called for, on the memorable night when Dorchester Heights were fortified. After the British had left Boston, he was intrusted with the duty of again throwing up works in Charlestown, and other points about the harbor. He died at Stoughton, June 21, 1796, aged eighty-four.

Major Scarborough Gridley, who was ordered, with additional artillery companies to Charlestown, but took post at Cobble Hill to fire at the "Glasgow" frigate, was tried by a court-martial, of which General Greene was president. The following was the sentence, September 24, 1775: "Major Scarborough Gridley, tried at a late court-martial, whereof Brigadier-General Greene was president, for 'being deficient in his duty upon the 17th of June last, the day of the action upon Bunker's Hill,' the court find Major Scarborough Gridley guilty of a breach of orders. They do, therefore, dismiss him from the Massachusetts service; but, on account of his inexperience and youth, and the great confusion that attended that day's transactions in general, they do not consider him incapable of a continental commission, should the general officers recommend him to his Excellency." He was a son of Colonel Gridley; and parental partiality procured his appointment in preference to that of Benjamin Thompson, afterwards the celebrated Count Rumford. The latter accompanied Major Brooks the last time he was ordered on, and met the Americans in their retreat.

Captain Callender, for disobedience of orders and alleged cowardice, was tried June 27, — the first of the trials on account of this battle. The court sentenced him to be cashiered; and Washington, in an order, July 7, declared him to be

"dismissed from all further service in the continental service as an officer." But Callender despised the charge of cowardice; and, determined to wipe out the unjust stigma, continued in the army as a volunteer. At the battle of Long Island he fought with such signal bravery that Washington ordered the sentence to be erased from the Orderly Book, and his commission to be restored to him. He was taken prisoner by the enemy, August 27, 1776. He remained over a year in the hands of the British. A touching petition, dated September 15, 1777, was addressed to the government of Massachusetts by his wife, in his behalf. "Your petitioner," it says, "with four helpless infants, is now, through the distress of a kind and loving husband, a tender and affectionate parent, reduced to a state of misery and wretchedness and want truly pitiable." Her devotion had found a way of relief, by an exchange, and it was successful. Swett states that this brave soldier left the service at the peace with the highest honor and reputation.

Captain S. R. Trevett's gallantry and perseverance rescued the only field-piece saved of the six taken to the field. He lived to an advanced age.

The New Hampshire troops consisted of the regiments of Colonels Stark and Reed, and one company, Reuben Dow's, in Prescott's regiment. They fought with great bravery.

Colonel John Stark's regiment was large and full. There is no return, however, specifying the number of men, in the office of the Secretary of State of New Hampshire. In the roll, Isaac Wyman is named lieutenant-colonel; Andrew McClary, major (though the records of the Congress state that he was appointed major of the 3d, or Poor's, regiment); Abiel Chandler, adjutant; John Caldwell, quartermaster; David Osgood, chaplain; Obadiah Williams, surgeon; Samuel McClintock, chaplain.

Colonel Stark, afterwards the hero of Bennington, behaved with his characteristic bravery. After he had detached, early in the morning, a third of his men, it is said he visited the redoubt in company with his major, when he found his men in the Hollow between Winter and Ploughed Hills. On leading the troops into action, he made a spirited address, and ordered three cheers to be given. By his order, also, the stones on the beach of Mystic River were thrown up in the form of a breastwork. These are nearly all the particulars relating to his conduct that have been stated. But all accounts speak of his coolness and intrepidity.

When the order was received for the remainder of this regiment to march to Bunker Hill, it was paraded in front of a house used as an arsenal, where each man received a gill cup full of powder,

fifteen balls, and one flint. After this the cartridges were to be made up, and this occasioned much delay. Hence the regiment did not get to the hill until about two o'clock.

The major of this regiment, Andrew McClary, was a favorite officer. He was nearly six feet and a half in height, and of an athletic frame. During the action he fought with great bravery; and, amidst the roar of the artillery, his stentorian voice was heard animating the men and inspiring them with his own energy. After the action was over, he rode to Medford to procure bandages for the wounded; and, on his return, went with a few of his comrades to reconnoitre the British, then on Bunker Hill. As he was on his way to join his men, a shot from a frigate lying where Craigie's Bridge is passed through his body. He leaped a few feet from the ground, pitched forward, and fell dead on his face. He was carried to Medford, and interred with the honors of war. He was, General Dearborn writes, a brave, great, and good man. A spirited notice of him appeared in the New Hampshire "Gazette," dated Epsom, July, 1775. It says: "The Major discovered great intrepidity and presence of mind in the action, and his noble soul glowed with ardor and the love of his country; and, like the Roman Camillus, who left his plough, commanded the army, and conquered his opponents, so the Major, upon the first intelligence of

hostilities at Concord, left his farm and went a volunteer to assist his suffering brethren, where he was soon called to a command, which he executed to his eternal honor, and has thereby acquired the reputation of a brave officer and a disinterested patriot; and may his name be held in respect by all the lovers of liberty to the end of time, while the names of the sons of tyranny are despised and disgraced, and nothing left to them but the badges of their perfidy and infamy! May the widow of the deceased be respected for his sake; and may his children inherit his spirit and bravery, but not meet with his fate!"

Captain Henry Dearborn, who afterwards became so distinguished in the history of the country, both in civil and military capacities, commanded one of the companies of this regiment, and has supplied an account of the action full of interesting details.

The chaplain of the regiment, Dr. McClintock, was in the battle, animating the men by his exhortations, prayers, and intrepidity.

James Reed's regiment, consisting, June 14, of four hundred and eighty-six rank and file, was stationed at Charlestown Neck. Israel Gilman was lieutenant-colonel; Nathan Hale, major; Stephen Peabody, adjutant; Isaac Frye, quartermaster; Ezra Green, surgeon. Few details have been preserved of the service of this regiment. Colonel

Reed was, Colonel Swett remarks, "a highly respectable officer, and served at Ticonderoga in 1776. His letters to the New Hampshire Congress bear evidence of a patriotic spirit, while his orders to his regiment evince a good disciplinarian. No special mention appears of him in the accounts of the battle. General Folsom, however, in writing of the gallantry of the New Hampshire troops, makes no discrimination. Adjutant Peabody behaved, General Sullivan writes, with great courage and intrepidity. William Lee, first orderly sergeant of Spaulding's company, "not only fought well himself," say the officers and men of this company, in a petition to Washington, August 10, 1775, "but gave good advice to the men to place themselves in right order, and to stand their ground well."

The Connecticut forces at Cambridge were under the command of General Putnam. His regiment was full, containing ten companies. Experience Storrs was his lieutenant-colonel, John Durkee his first major, and Obadiah Johnson his second major. A letter dated June 20, 1775, states that the whole of this regiment, excepting Captain Mosely's company, was in the action. Two companies that appear in the returns as belonging to General Spencer's regiment were certainly in the battle, — Chester's and Coit's. Chester states that, "by orders from head-quarters, one subaltern, one sergeant, and

thirty privates were drafted out overnight to intrench, from his company." Captain Clark, in a letter, June 17, 1818, says he received orders from General Putnam "to detach one ensign, with twenty-eight men," to march early in the evening of the 16th of June. Drafts were made from Putnam's and Knowlton's company, and probably from one other. No order for more of the Connecticut forces to go on appears to have been given, until General Putnam gave it, after the British landed, about noon, on the 17th.

The conduct of the Connecticut troops is mentioned in terms of high commendation in the private letters and the journals of the time. Major Durkee, Captains Knowlton, Chester, Coit, Lieutenants Dana, Hide, Grosvenor, Webb, Bingham, and Keyes, are specially named as deserving of credit. One letter states that the officers and soldiers under the command of Major Durkee, Captains Knowlton, Coit, Clark, and Chester, and all the Connecticut troops ordered up, and some from this province, did honor to themselves and the cause of their country. An article printed directly after the battle in the Connecticut "Courant" says: "Captain Chester and Lieutenant Webb, who marched up to the lines and re-enforced the troops, by their undaunted behavior, timely and vigorous assistance, it is universally agreed, are justly entled to the grateful acknowledgments of their

country." They went on near the close of the battle. In a letter dated July 11, 1775, and addressed to Silas Dean, Lieutenant Webb gives a vivid idea both of the hotness of the fire and of the desperate nature of the hand-to-hand contests of the day. "For my part, I confess," he writes, "when I was descending into the valley, from off Bunker Hill, side by side of Captain Chester, at the head of our company, I had no more thought of ever rising the hill again, than I had of ascending to heaven, as Elijah did, soul and body together. But after we got engaged, to see the dead and wounded around me, I had no other feeling but that of revenge. Four men were shot dead within five feet of me, but, thank Heaven, I escaped, with only the graze of a musket-ball on my hat. I think it my duty to tell you of the bravery of one of our company. Edward Brown stood side by side with Gershom Smith in the intrenchments. Brown saw his danger, — discharged his own and Smith's gun when they came so close as to push over our small breastwork. Brown sprang, seized a regular's gun, took it from him, and killed him on the spot; brought off the gun in triumph, and has it now by him. In this engagement we lost four brave men, and four wounded."

The conduct of Captain Thomas Knowlton elicited high praise. He commenced the construction of the rail-fence protection, and fought here with

admirable bravery and conduct, until the retreat. He received from a Bostonian a gold-laced hat, a sash, and gold breastplate, for his behavior in this battle. Soon after, he was promoted; and while major, he made, January 8, 1776, a daring and successful excursion into Charlestown, to burn several houses used by the British; and as lieutenant-colonel, was the confidant of Washington in the enterprise of the memorable Nathan Hale. On the 16th of September, 1776, while exhibiting his usual intrepidity, he was killed at the battle of Harlem Heights. Washington, in the general orders, after alluding to his gallantry and bravery, and his fall while "gloriously fighting," said he "would have been an honor to any country." He was about thirty-six when he was killed. On his fall a brother officer gave the following impromptu lines, printed at the time: —

> "Here Knowlton lies, — the great, the good, the brave;
> Slain in the field, now triumphs in the grave.
> The valiant often die in martial strife;
> The coward lives: his punishment is life."

General Ward expressed his thanks to the troops engaged in this battle, in the following order, of June 24: "The General orders his thanks to be given to those officers and soldiers who behaved so gallantly at the late action in Charlestown. Such bravery gives the General sensible pleasure,

as he is thereby fully satisfied that we shall finally come off victorious, and triumph over the enemies of freedom and America."

So conflicting are the authorities, that the number of troops engaged, on either side, cannot be precisely ascertained. "The number of the Americans during the battle," Colonel Swett says, "was fluctuating, but may be fairly estimated at three thousand five hundred, who joined in the battle, and five hundred more, who covered the retreat." General Putnam's estimate was two thousand two hundred. General Washington says the number engaged, at any one time, was one thousand five hundred; and this was adopted by Dr. Gordon. This is as near accuracy as can be arrived at. General Gage, in his official account, states the British force at "something over two thousand;" and yet the same account acknowledges one thousand and fifty-four killed and wounded. This certainly indicates a force far larger than two thousand. Neither British accounts nor the British plans of the battle mention all the regiments that were in the field. Thus the movements of the second battalion of marines are not given; yet the official table of loss states that it had seven killed and thirty wounded; and Clarke, also, states it was not until after the Americans had retreated that General Gage sent over this second battalion, with four regiments of foot, and a company of ar-

tillery. Americans, who counted the troops as they left the wharves in Boston, state that five thousand went over to Charlestown; but, probably, not even four thousand were actually engaged.

Statements were made as to the numbers engaged, in a debate in the House of Commons, December 7, 1775. The Lord Mayor — Mr. Sawbridge — said it had been very fashionable, both within and without doors, to stigmatize the Americans as cowards and poltroons, but he believed the truth would be found on the other side; for he was well informed that the king's troops, in the action of Bunker's Hill, consisted of twenty-five hundred men, and the provincials not quite fifteen hundred; and even those fifteen hundred would have completely defeated the king's troops, if their ammunition had not been totally spent. Lord North said, he was but an indifferent judge of military operations; but, by the best accounts he could obtain, the provincials were, at least, three to one, and were, besides, very strongly intrenched. He estimated the number of Americans at eight thousand, at least. Colonel Morris estimated the Americans at five thousand, and the British at twenty-five hundred.

The time the battle lasted is variously stated; some accounts state four hours, but they include the heavy fire of artillery that covered the landing. The Committee of Safety (MS.) account says:

"The time the engagement lasted, from the first fire of the musketry till the last, was exactly one hour and a half." The losses of individuals in the battle were allowed by the colonies, and there are hundreds of petitions from the soldiers in it. They often state the number of times the petitioner discharged his musket. Thus, one says: "He discharged his piece more than thirty times, within fair gun-shot, and he is confident he did not discharge it in vain." Another says: "He had an opportunity of firing seventeen times at our unnatural enemies, which he cheerfully improved, being a marksman." Several letters unite in stating the time of the action at one hour and a half. The general battle, with small arms, began about half-past three, and ended about five.

No mention is made of colors being used on either side. At one of the patriotic celebrations of 1825, a flag was borne which was said to have been unfurled at Bunker Hill; and tradition states that one was hoisted at the redoubt, and that Gage and his officers were puzzled to read by their glasses its motto. A whig told them it was — "Come if you dare!" In the eulogy on Warren is the following, in a description of the astonishment of the British on seeing the redoubt: —

> "Soon as Aurora gave the golden day,
> And drove the sable shades of night away,
> Columbia's troops are seen in dread array,
> And waving streamers in the air display."

In a MS. plan of the battle, colors are represented in the centre of each British regiment.

The following is the record in General Ward's Orderly Book — the only reference to the battle it contains — of the loss of the Americans: "June 17. The battle of Charlestown was fought this day. Killed, one hundred and fifteen; wounded, three hundred and five; captured, thirty. Total, four hundred and fifty." They also lost five pieces of cannon out of six, and a large quantity of intrenching tools. The following table shows the loss sustained by each regiment, and presents a somewhat different result: —

	Killed.	*Wounded.*		*Killed.*	*Wounded.*
Prescott's	42	28	Ward's	1	6
Bridge's	15	29	Scammans's	0	2
Frye's	15	31	Gerrish's	3	2
Brewer's	7	11	Whitcomb's	5	8
Little's	7	23	Stark's	15	45
Gardner's	6	7	Reed's	5	21
Nixon's	3	10	Putnam & Coit's Co.	11	26
Woodbridge's	1	5	Chester's Co.	4	4
Doolittle's	0	9			
Gridley's	0	4			

Killed, 140; wounded, 271; captured, 30.

The following list of prisoners taken by the British, June 17, appeared in the journals of September, 1775: —

Lieutenant-Colonel Parker . .	Chelmsford	Dead.
Captain Benjamin Walker . .	Chelmsford	„
Lieutenant Amaziah Fausett .	Groton	„
Lieutenant William Scott . .	Peterborough . . .	Alive.
Sergeant Robert Phelps . .	Lancaster	Dead.
Phineas Nevers	Windsor	„
Oliver Stevens	Townsend	„
Daniel McGrath	Unknown	„
John Perkins	New Rutland . . .	Alive.
Jacob Frost	Tewksbury	„
Amasa Fisk	Pepperell	Dead.
Daniel Sessions	Andover	Alive.
Jonathan Norton	Newburyport . . .	„
Philip Johnson Beck	Boston — Mansfield .	„
Benjamin Bigelow	Peckerfield	„
Benjamin Wilson	Billerica	„
Archibald McIntosh	Townsend	Dead.
David Kemp	Groton	„
John Deland	Charlestown . . .	Alive.
Lawrence Sullivan	Wethersfield . . .	„
Timothy Kettell (a lad) . . .	Dismissed Charlestown.	
William Robinson	Unknown	Dead.
Benjamin Ross	Ashford, Conn. . .	„
John Dillon	Jersey, Old England	„
One unknown	. . . . .	„
William Kench	Peckerfield	„
James Dodge	Edinburgh, Scotland	„
William Robinson	Connecticut . . .	„
John Lord	Unknown	„
James Milliken	Boston	„
Stephen Foster	Groton	„

Total, — 20 dead, 10 alive, 1 dismissed.

Some of the dead were buried on the field of battle. One deposit appears to have been a trench near the line of the almshouse estate, running par-

allel with Elm Street. Here a large number of American buttons have been found attached to bones. Americans were buried in other places in Charlestown, which are known from similar circumstances. The wounded were carried to the western side of Bunker Hill, and then to Cambridge. Doctors Thomas Kittredge, William Eustis, — afterwards governor,—Walter Hastings, Thomas Welsh, Isaac Foster, Lieutenant-Colonel Bricket, David Townsend, and John Hart, were in attendance. The house of Governor Oliver, in Cambridge, known as the Gerry estate, was occupied as a hospital. Many of the soldiers who died of their wounds were buried in a field in front of this house. Rev. Samuel Cook's house, at West Cambridge, was also used for a hospital. The prisoners were carried to Boston jail.

The loss of the British was admitted, in the official account, to have been two hundred and twenty-six killed, eight hundred and twenty-eight wounded; total, one thousand and fifty-four. But the Americans set it as high as fifteen hundred. The wounded, during the whole night and the next day, were conveyed to Boston, where the streets were filled with groans and lamentation.

A lady in Boston wrote to her brother, Sunday, June 18: —

"Once more at my pen. I can scarcely compose myself enough for any thing, nor will you wonder,

when you know the situation we are in at present. Yesterday another battle fought. Charlestown the scene of action. They began early in the morning, and continued all day fighting. In the afternoon they set fire to the town, and it is now wholly laid in ashes. We could view this melancholy sight from the top of our house. One poor man went on the top of the meeting-house to see the battle. Was not able to get down again, but perished in the flames. About five in the afternoon they began to send home their wounded. Here, my dear brother, was a scene of woe indeed. To see such numbers as passed by must have moved the hardest heart. Judge, then, the feelings of your sister. Some without noses, some with but one eye, broken legs, and arms, some limping along, scarcely able to reach the hospital; while others were brought in wagons, chaise, coaches, sedans, and beds, on men's shoulders. The poor women wringing their hands, and crying most pitifully, — all excepting one, who, on seeing her husband in a cart badly wounded, vowed revenge, went off, but soon returned completely equipped, with her gun on her shoulder, her knapsack at her back, marched down the street, and left the poor husband, to try how many she could send along to tell he was coming. There is a vast number of our men killed and wounded; a great many officers, too, are sent to their long homes. Amongst the rest, one fine-look-

ing man, much about your age, who stopped against our windows to have his leg, which was slipping, moved a little. He lived till this morning. The poor fellow came ashore but yesterday or the day before; perhaps his mother's darling and his father's joy, — cut off in the midst of his days; his sisters, too, if he had any, must weep his untimely fate. Hope it will never be my lot to have any of my near connections follow the army."

A letter, June 30, 1775, says; "I have seen many from Boston who were eye-witnesses to the most melancholy scene ever beheld in this part of the world. The Saturday night and Sabbath were taken up in carrying over the dead and wounded; and all the wood-carts in town, it is said, were employed, — chaises and coaches for the officers. They have taken the workhouse, almshouse, and manufactory-house, for the wounded." The physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries of Boston rendered every assistance in their power. The processions were melancholy sights. "In the first carriage," writes Clarke, "was Major Williams, bleeding and dying, and three dead captains of the 52d Regiment. In the second, four dead officers; then another, with wounded officers." The privates who died on the field were immediately buried there, — "in holes," Gage's report states. Collections of bones have been occasionally found on the east side of Breed's Hill, in digging wells or

cellars, having attached to them buttons, with the numbers of the different regiments. "On Monday morning," a British account says, "all the dead officers were decently buried in Boston, in a private manner, in the different churches and churchyards there."

A large proportion of the killed were officers, and among them some highly distinguished. Lieutenant-Colonel Abercrombie, at the head of the grenadiers, was shot while storming the works. He was a brave and noble-hearted soldier; and when the men were bearing him from the field, he begged them to spare his old friend Putnam. "If you take General Putnam alive," he said, "don't hang him; for he's a brave man." He died on the 24th of June.

Major Pitcairn, the commander of the marines, was widely known in the country from his connection with the events of the 19th of April, and many of the Americans claim the honor of having killed him in this battle. Dr. John Eliot wrote in his almanac the following account of his fall: "This amiable and gallant officer was slain entering the intrenchments. He had been wounded twice; then putting himself at the head of his forces, he faced danger, calling out, 'Now for the glory of the marines!' He received four balls in his body." He was much beloved by his command. "I have lost my father," his son exclaimed,

as he fell. "We have all lost a father," was the echo of the regiment. His son bore him to a boat, and then to a house in Prince Street, Boston, where he was attended by a physician, at the special request of General Gage, but soon died. He was a courteous and accomplished officer, and an exemplary man. His son was soon promoted.

Major Spendlove, of the 43d Regiment, another distinguished officer, died of his wounds. He had served with unblemished reputation upwards of forty years in the same regiment, and been three times wounded, — once when with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, again at the reduction of Martinico, and at the capture of Havana. His conduct at the battle was favorably mentioned by the commander. Other officers of merit fell. Captain Addison, related to the author of the "Spectator," and Captain Sherwin, Howe's aid-de-camp, were killed. The slaughter of officers occasioned great astonishment in England.

Of the officers who acted as aids to General Howe, all were wounded, and only one of them, Lieutenant Page, of the engineers, lived to reach England. He distinguished himself at the storming of the redoubt, and received General Howe's thanks. He made an exact plan of the battle. It is the only correct one engraved in England, and is used in this work. Many of the wounded officers returned to England. For many months the British

journals contained notices of their arrival, and presentation at court. One of them, selected as a specimen, reads as follows: "March 28, 1776. — Yesterday Captain Cockering, who lost his arm at Bunker's Hill, was introduced to his Majesty at St. James's, by the Duke of Chandos, and graciously received; at the same time his Majesty was pleased to present him with a captain's commission in a company of invalids."

Captain Ewing, of the marines, "gallantly leading the grenadier company in the thin, red line which charged up the hill," received a wound, and, by order of the king, a medal.

Captain Harris, whose words before the battle have been cited, was ascending the works for the third time when a ball grazed the top of his head, and he fell into the arms of Lord Rawdon. "For God's sake," he said, "let me die in peace." He lived to become a lord.

Captain Drew, of the light-infantry, of the 35th, behaved gallantly. Three shots took effect on him; and he had two contusions. He languished eighteen weeks, but survived. Baird, the third officer, was killed. His dying words were: "I wish success to the 35th: only say I behaved as became a soldier." Drew says "the company was cut to pieces, to six privates, almost in my sight." The oldest soldier led the remaining five of this company in the pursuit. The grenadiers of this

regiment equalled their brethren in gallantry, and were as unfortunate. The fall of Baird elicited a tribute to his memory, closing, —

"Thus like the fearless Theban he expired;
A fate bewailed yet envied by the brave;
The muse, with tender sympathy inspired,
Thus pours her sorrows o'er his silent grave.

Nor you, ye warriors! shall unpraised remain:
Reduced to five, in sullen rage they stand;
Each generous leader wounded sore or slain,
The oldest soldier led the slender band."

An incident of a different character is related of Lieutenant Lenthal of the 23d, or Welsh Fusileers. Seeing that his regiment was disorganized, he took refuge in a saw-pit. A common soldier, belonging to the same company, followed the example of his commanding officer, and both of them escaped alive. Some years afterwards, when the Captain was returned to Burford, his residence, a poor woman one day gave him a hearty benediction, which led him to ask the reason of her good wishes. "God bless you, sir," said she, "you saved my son's life in Ameriky!" "And how did I save your son's life?" replied the Captain. "O, sir, he would never have thought of getting down into the saw-pit, if you hadn't done so first!"

Lieutenant Hamilton was wounded. He became one of the sheriffs of Lancashire, and a great friend of Walter Scott. On his death-bed, in 1831, he

sent for Scott, and asked him to choose and retain as a memorial any article he liked in his collection of arms. Scott selected the sword that Hamilton wore at Bunker Hill.

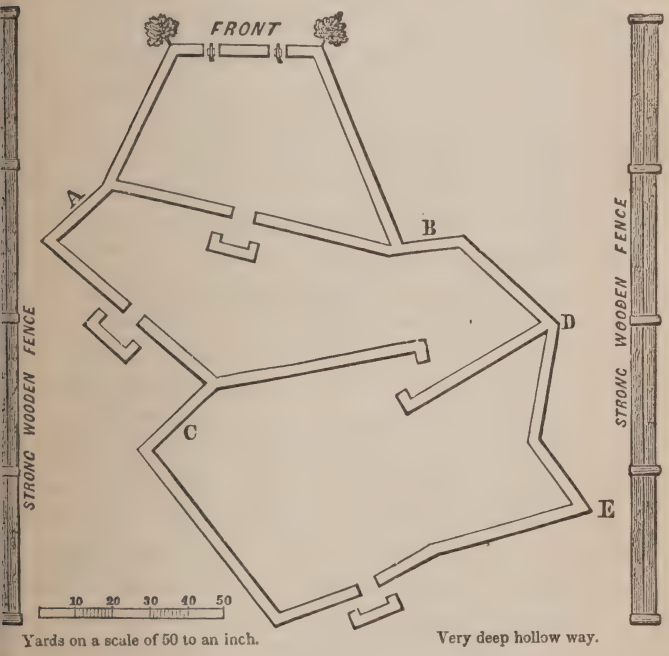
The British journals contain many comments on this battle, and for years they continued to publish incidents in relation to it. For several months after it took place letters from officers engaged in it continued to appear in them. They were astonished at its terrible slaughter. It was compared with other great battles, especially with those of Quebec and of Minden. Officers who had served in all Prince Ferdinand's campaigns remarked, that "so large a proportion of a detachment was never killed and wounded in Germany." It far exceeded, in this respect, and in the hotness of the fire, the battle of Minden. The manner in which whole regiments and companies were cut up was commented upon. The 5th, 52d, 59th, and the grenadiers of the Welsh Fusileers are specially mentioned. One company of grenadiers, of the 35th, persevered in advancing after their officers fell, and five of their number only left, and they led on by the oldest soldier. This was adduced as a memorable instance of English valor; and it was exultingly asked, "What history can produce its parallel?" Attempts were made to account for the facts that so many of the British, and so few of the Americans, fell. One officer writes of the

former, that the American rifles "were peculiarly adapted to take off the officers of a whole line as it marches to an attack." Another writes, "That every rifleman was attended by two men, one on each side of him, to load pieces for him, so that he had nothing to do but fire as fast as a piece was put into his hand; and this is the real cause of so many of our brave officers falling." One reason given why the British troops killed so few of the provincials was, that the over-sized balls used by the artillery would not permit of a true shot. Meantime, transports with the wounded, and with the remains of the regiments which had been so cut up, as they arrived in England, continued to afford living evidence of the terrible realities of this conflict.

The British officers described the redoubt as having been so strong that it must have been the work of several days. One says: "The fortification on Bunker Hill must have been the work of some days; it was very regular, and exceeding strong." A plan of it appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine," which is here presented as a curious memorial of the battle. It is called "Plan of the Redoubt and Intrenchment on the Heights of Charlestown (commonly called Bunker's Hill), opposite Boston, in New England, attacked and carried by his Majesty's troops, June 17, 1775."

The "Gentleman's Magazine" says: "This re-

doubt was well executed. In the only side on which it could be attacked were two pieces of cannon. In the two salient angles were two trees, with their branches projecting off the para-



pet, to prevent an entry being made on the angles. The two flanks (A and B) of the intrenchment were well contrived, as the fire from them crossed within twenty yards of the face of the redoubt.

The flank C sufficiently secures its face; and the bastion D, with its flanks E and B, is the best defence against such troops as might endeavor to pass or cut down the fence."

General Dearborn says: "It was a square redoubt, the curtains of which were about sixty or seventy feet in extent, with an intrenchment or breastwork extending fifty or sixty feet from the northern angle, towards Mystic River. In the course of the night the ramparts had been raised to the height of six or seven feet, with a small ditch at their base; but it was yet in a rude, imperfect state."

General Howe, it was conceded even by his enemies, behaved with great bravery through the whole battle. Of the notices of him in the British journals I select the following: "General Howe, during the whole engagement on the 17th of June last, was in the most imminent danger; and Mr. Evans, an English servant, who went over with him, could not be prevailed on to quit him till the whole of the action was over. Evans attended the whole time with wine and other necessaries for the refreshment of the General and those about him; during which Evans had one of the bottles in his hand dashed to pieces, and got a contusion on one of his arms at the same time, by a ball from some of the provincials."

General Clinton's services were highly com-

mended, and great influence was ascribed to his advice. Few details, however, are mentioned of his conduct, besides his rally of the troops for the third attack, and his advice to follow up the victory by a close pursuit. "The differences between Clinton and Howe broke out first in this battle," where Howe attacked in front, "and Clinton proposed to attack in the rear." Few particulars, also, are named of General Pigot. General Gage attributed "the success of the day, in a great measure, to his firmness and gallantry."

General Gage was severely criticised. It was said, though he was urged to take possession of the Heights of Charlestown, he did not even reconnoitre the ground, and this neglect was a great error; another error certainly was, that, instead of confining our attack to the enemy's left wing only, the assault was made on the whole front: the army should have landed in their rear and cut off their retreat; the troops should have marched up in column on the first attack, and carried the works by the bayonet; the unnecessary load they bore exhausted them before they got into action; Mystic River was neglected, for the "Symmetry" transport might have taken a position at high water in the rear of the Americans, and played on their flank at the rail-fence; or one of the covered boats, musket-proof, and carrying a heavy piece of cannon, might have been towed

close in to the shore. And when the field was won, the success was less brilliant than it might have been, and ought to have been, for no pursuit was ordered after the Americans retreated. These criticisms, for the most part, were as just as they were severe. The issue of this battle destroyed the military reputation of General Gage, and occasioned his recall.

Nor did the British troops, gallantly as they behaved, escape the denunciations of party. Many allusions to their conduct on this day were made in the debates of Parliament. Thus Colonel Barré, February 20, 1776, said the troops, out of aversion to the service, misbehaved on this day. General Burgoyne arose with warmth, and contradicted Colonel Barré in the flattest manner. He allowed that the troops gave way a little at one time, because they were flanked by the fire out of the houses, &c., at Charlestown, but they soon rallied and advanced; and no men on earth ever behaved with more spirit, firmness, and perseverance, till they forced the enemy out of their intrenchments. This charge, in general, was certainly undeserved. At no time was British valor more needed to insure success, and at no time, General Gage remarked, was it "more conspicuous than in this action." In the general orders of June 19 was the following tribute: "The Commander-in-chief returns his most grateful thanks to Major-General

Howe for the extraordinary exertion of his military abilities on the 17th instant. He returns his thanks also to Major-General Clinton and Brigadier-General Pigot, for the share they took in the success of the day; as well as to Lieutenant-Colonels Nesbit, Abercrombie, Gunning, and Clarke; Majors Butler, Williams, Bruce, Tupper, Spendlove, Small, and Mitchell; and the rest of the officers and soldiers, who, by remarkable efforts of courage and gallantry, overcame every disadvantage, and drove the rebels from their redoubt and strongholds on the heights of Charlestown, and gained a complete victory." On the 28th of September the thanks of the King were given as follows: "The King has been pleased to order the Commander-in-chief to express his Majesty's thanks both to the officers and soldiers for their resolution and gallantry, by which they attacked and defeated the rebels on the 17th of June last, who had every advantage of numbers and situation; and more especially expresses to Generals Howe and Clinton, and to Brigadier-General Pigot, the sense his Majesty entertains of the spirit, resolution, and conduct by which they distinguished themselves so much to their honor on that day."

The wanton destruction of Charlestown excited indignation at home and sympathy abroad. It had been repeatedly threatened previous to the battle. Its importance, in a military point of view,

added to the bold and decided part it bore in the previous ten years' controversy, seemed to mark it for sacrifice. A threat to this effect was given on the 19th of April. The British general, on the 21st of April, sent to the selectmen a message to this effect, — that if American troops were allowed to occupy the town, or throw up works on the heights, the ships would be ordered to fire on it. Subsequently, probably when a part of the army marched into the town, General Gage sent word to the citizens that if the troops were not removed he would burn it. Consequently, a committee waited upon General Ward, informed him of the threat, and stated that if the good of the cause required that the troops should remain they would not object. Comment is unnecessary on so interesting a fact, and one so honorable to the patriotism of the inhabitants of Charlestown.

In consequence of these threats, the belief in town was very general that its destruction would follow any military operations within the peninsula. Hence the inhabitants, with the exception of about two hundred, had removed into the country, — some residing with friends, the poor supported by the towns. Many carried with them their most valuable effects. Others had secreted their goods in various places, as in dried wells, in cellars, and holes dug in the ground. Committees were appointed to superintend the supply of pro-

visions to those who remained. None could pass the Neck, however, without a permit from a person stationed at the "Sun Tavern," at this place. The owners of the pastures went in to mow the fields, and on the day previous to the battle the grass was cut in the neighborhood of the rail-fence. The town, therefore, on the day of the battle was nearly deserted.

A few of the citizens, however, remained up to the hour of the engagement. While the British were embarking, Rev. John Martin, who fought bravely in the action, and was with the troops all night, left Breed's Hill, went to Charlestown Ferry, and with a spy-glass — Dr. Stiles writes — "viewed the shipping, and observed their preparations of floating-batteries, and boats filling with soldiers. There were now in Charlestown a considerable number of people — one hundred or two hundred, or more, men and women — not yet removed, though the body of the people and effects were gone. While he called in at a house for a drink of water, a cannon-ball from the shipping passed through the house. He persuaded the inhabitants to depart, but they seemed reluctant. He assured them that it would be warm work that day." He returned to the hill, but soon, about noon, went down again. "Mr. Cary and son," he says, — "still at their own house, — urged him to take some refreshment and rest, as he had been

fatigued all night. He lay down at Mr. Cary's about ten minutes, when a ball came through the house. He rose and returned, and then the town evacuated with all haste." Advertisements in the journals indicate that furniture was carried out on this day.

General Burgoyne's letter supplies the most authentic description of the burning of the town. He writes of the British columns as they were moving to the attack: "They were also exceedingly hurt by musketry from Charlestown, though Clinton and I did not perceive it till Howe sent us word by a boat, and desired us to set fire to the town, which was immediately done; we threw a parcel of shells, and the whole was immediately in flames." The town was burning on the second attack. The smoke was seen a great distance. "Terrible, indeed, was that scene," a letter from Salem reads, "even at our distance. The western horizon in the daytime was one huge body of smoke, and in the evening a continued blaze; and the perpetual sound of cannon and volleys of musketry worked up our imaginations to a high degree of fright." The houses within the peninsula, with the exception of a few in the neighborhood of Mill Street, were entirely consumed. The number of buildings was estimated at about four hundred; and the loss of property at £117,982 5*s*. 2*d*. Some of the property secreted was found by the British,

while much of it was recovered by the owners on the evacuation of the town. Many from Boston had deposited goods in this town for safe-keeping, and these were consumed. Dr. Mather lost his library.

Of the citizens was Seth Sweetser, the town-clerk, the school-master, and the writer of several of the patriotic papers issued by the town. The following letter, written in his retreat at Wilmington, shows the spirit of the Christian patriot. It is printed for the first time: —

"WILMINGTON, July 4th, 1775.

"DEAR SIR, — I need not tell you that I sympathize with you and all our Charlestown friends, under the heavy loss we have met with, by our dwellings, &c., being laid in ashes. We find it literally true that riches make themselves wings and fly away. Let us realize it as a truth, there is no evil in the city, but the Lord has done it. It's true the thing was done by such men whose tender mercies are cruelty; but if we eye the hand of God, this will quiet our minds. The judge of all the earth does all things right. He is holy in all his ways, &c.; and though clouds and darkness are sometimes round about him, as to the dispensations of his providence, as it seems to us short-sighted creatures, yet justice and judgment are the stability of his Throne. Let us beg of God to enable us to make a wise improvement of every thing that befalls us. Let us even take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, crying to God for his Grace, that this may be a happy means of opening our

eyes to see the vanity of all sublunary enjoyments, and excite us to secure an interest in that good part which will never be taken away, — an heavenly inheritance. Oh, happy exchange! May you and I be brought by the influences of the Spirit of God to such a heavenly temper of mind as to be able to say, from the bottom of our hearts, O God, here we are, do with us as seemeth good in thy sight. Happy, thrice happy, the man that shall attain to this divine temper, this heavenly disposition, — happy in life, happy in death. I suppose these hints may be agreeable to you, to muse upon in your retirement; yet I must stop. I know it's your duty to attend the Provincial Congress, to consult such measures as may have a happy tendency, by the blessing of God, to extricate this poor distressed land out of our troubles. I pray God to give you wisdom.

"I'm now an exile in Wilmington Woods; and though I may here get some good to myself by reading, &c., yet I can't be contented with this: I long to do something that may be serviceable to others. You know I have always had full employ; I abhor idleness; I wish that a door may be opened, that I may lay out the small talents God has bestowed upon me in His service. I beg the favor of you to inquire of the members of the Congress if they know of any town that is destitute of a school-master. You know that I am capable of instructing youth, not only in the languages, but also in writing and arithmetic, &c. I must, as soon as possible, do something to support my family; the small matter I had by me in money will soon be gone. I know you will take pains to serve me; and if you communicate my thoughts

to Deacon Cheever (pray remember me to him), he will do all he can to serve me; I have always experienced him to be my friend. If there is any thing you can think of that I can do, if never so mean an office, I'm quite willing to do it. My son Henry, who works at Cambridge, will deliver you this letter, and gladly bring one from you; and, if you have nothing else at present to write, say, Your friend, Richard Devens. It will give me more pleasure than it can be trouble to you.

"I am, Sir, yours, whilst my own,

"Mr. Richard Devens. Seth Sweetser."

The destruction naturally excited great indignation in the colonies. John Langdon, in a letter dated Philadelphia, July 3, 1775, writes: "The low, mean revenge and wanton cruelty of the ministerial sons of tyranny, in burning the pleasant town of Charlestown, beggars all description; this does not look like the fight of those who have so long been friends, and would hope to be friends again, but rather of a most cruel enemy, — though we shall not wonder when we reflect that it is the infernal hand of tyranny which always has, and ever will, deluge that part of the world (which it lays hold of) in blood."

The British "Annual Register" of 1775 said: "The fate of Charlestown was also a matter of melancholy contemplation to the serious and unprejudiced of all parties. It was the first settlement made in the colony, and was considered as

the mother of Boston, — that town owing its birth and nurture to emigrants of the former. Charlestown was large, handsome, and well built, both in respect to its public and private edifices; it contained about four hundred houses, and had the greatest trade of any port in the province, except Boston. It is said that the two ports cleared out a thousand vessels annually for a foreign trade, exclusive of an infinite number of coasters. It is now buried in ruins. Such is the termination of human labor, industry, and wisdom, and such are the fatal fruits of civil dissensions."

The British press, on the American side, kept this battle before the people. In 1778 there appeared a communication in a London paper, beginning: —

Nitore in adversum, nec me,
Qui cætera vincit Impetus.

Now acting in AMERICA,

A NEW TRAGEDY,

As it was first attempted at Bunker's-Hill,

called, The DESTRUCTION of LIBERTY.

The principal parts to be performed by
The Germans and Scotch, assisted by detachments
of the Guards.

Between the acts are exhibited most magnificent pieces of fire-work, such as burning of towns and ships; concluding with a general massacre of old men, women, and children, performed to the life.

To which will be added,

A F A R C E,

Called, CONCILIATORY MEASURES;

Never attempted but once,
Being damned by the American Congress;
But to be tried once more by the Ministry,
Who are to embark for that purpose.

With the original Prologue, as spoken by ——
at Westminster.

The Epilogue by L—d G——e G———e.

It is thought that this piece will meet with the utmost contempt, as before.

Places to be taken on board any of his ——— ships, just ready to sail for America.

Any gentleman desirous of acting a part in the aforesaid Tragedy, and properly qualified, may be immediately supplied with a proper dress at the Drill, and all other necessaries, besides having the advantage of being transported at the public expense.

These recollections are not presented to keep alive national enmities. The late historian, William H. Prescott, the grandson of Colonel Prescott, married the granddaughter of Captain Linzee, who commanded the British sloop-of-war, the "Falcon;" and in his library were the swords, crossed, worn by each of these commanders in the battle. They now are in the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Society, with appropriate in-

scriptions. A member, Nathaniel Frothingham, D.D., when they were transferred, read the verses entitled "The Crossed Swords." One was, —

> "Oh, be prophetic too!
> And may those nations twain, as sign and seal
> Of endless amity, hang up their steel,
> As we these weapons do."

I thus have attempted to present the chief incidents of this memorable battle. It is its connection with the cause of American liberty that gives such an importance to this occasion, and such an interest to its minute details. In the words of Daniel Webster: —

"No national drama was ever developed in a more interesting and splendid first scene. The incidents and the result of the battle itself were most important, and indeed most wonderful. As a mere battle, few surpass it in whatever engages and interests the attention. It was fought on a conspicuous eminence, in the immediate neighborhood of a populous city; and consequently in the view of thousands of spectators. The attacking army moved over a sheet of water to the assault. The operations and movements were of course all visible and all distinct. Those who looked on from the houses and heights of Boston had a fuller view of every important operation and event than can ordinarily be had of any battle, or than can possibly

be had of such as are fought on a more extended ground, or by detachments of troops acting in different places, and at different times, and in some measure independently of each other. When the British columns were advancing to the attack, the flames of Charlestown (fired, as is generally supposed, by a shell) began to ascend. The spectators, far outnumbering both armies, thronged and crowded on every height and every point which afforded a view of the scene, themselves constituting a very important part of it.

"The troops of the two armies seemed like so many combatants in an amphitheatre. The manner in which they should acquit themselves was to be judged of, not, as in other cases of military engagements, by reports and future history, but by a vast and anxious assembly already on the spot, and waiting with unspeakable concern and emotion the progress of the day.

"In other battles the *recollection* of wives and children has been used as an excitement to animate the warrior's breast and nerve his arm. Here was not a mere recollection, but an actual *presence* of them, and other dear connections, hanging on the skirts of the battle, anxious and agitated, feeling almost as if wounded themselves by every blow of the enemy, and putting forth, as it were, their own strength, and all the energy of their own throbbing bosoms, into every gallant effort of their warring friends.

"But there was a more comprehensive and vastly more important view of that day's contest than has been mentioned, — a view, indeed, which ordinary eyes, bent intently on what was immediately before them, did not embrace, but which was perceived in its full extent and expansion by minds of a higher order. Those men who were at the head of the colonial councils, who had been engaged for years in the previous stages of the quarrel with England, and who had been accustomed to look forward to the future, were well apprised of the magnitude of the events likely to hang on the business of that day. They saw in it not only a battle, but the beginning of a civil war of unmeasured extent and uncertain issue. All America and all England were likely to be deeply concerned in the consequences. The individuals themselves, who knew full well what agency they had had in bringing affairs to this crisis, had need of all their courage, — not that disregard of personal safety, in which the vulgar suppose true courage to consist, but that high and fixed moral sentiment, that steady and decided purpose, which enables men to pursue a distant end, with a full view of the difficulties and dangers before them, and with a conviction that, before they arrive at the proposed end, should they ever reach it, they must pass through evil report as well as good report, and be liable to obloquy as well as to defeat.

"Spirits that fear nothing else, fear disgrace; and this danger is necessarily encountered by those who engage in civil war. Unsuccessful resistance is not only ruin to its authors, but is esteemed, and necessarily so, by the laws of all countries, treasonable. This is the case, at least, till resistance becomes so general and formidable as to assume the form of regular war. But who can tell, when resistance commences, whether it will attain even to that degree of success? Some of those persons who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 described themselves as signing it 'as with halters about their necks.' If there were grounds for this remark in 1776, when the cause had become so much more general, how much greater was the hazard when the battle of Bunker Hill was fought!

"These considerations constituted, to enlarged and liberal minds, the moral sublimity of the occasion; while to the outward senses, the movement of armies, the roar of artillery, the brilliancy of the reflection of a summer's sun from the burnished armor of the British columns, and the flames of a burning town, made up a scene of extraordinary grandeur."

APPENDIX.

THE "Massachusetts Spy, or American Oracle of Liberty," printed at Worcester, on Wednesday, June 21, 1775, had the following: —

"A correspondent has favored us with the following account of the battle near Charlestown, viz., 'The re-enforcement both of horse and foot being arrived at Boston, and our army having good intelligence that General Gage was about to take possession of the advantageous posts near Charlestown and Dorchester Point, the Committee of Safety advised that our troops should prepossess them, if possible. Accordingly, on Friday evening, the 16th instant, this was effected; and before daylight on Saturday morning their lines of circumvallation, on a small hill south of Bunker's Hill, in Charlestown, was in great forwardness. At this time the "Lively" man-of-war began to fire upon them. A number of our enemy's ships, tenders, and scows, or floating-batteries, soon came up; from all which the firing was general by twelve o'clock. About two, the enemy began to land at a point that leads out towards Noddle's Island, and immediately marched up to our intrenchments, from which they were twice repulsed

with great loss, but the third time they forced them. Our forces, which were in the lines, as well as those sent for their relief, were annoyed on all sides by balls and bombs from Copp's Hill, the ships, scows, &c. At this time the buildings in Charlestown appeared in flames in almost every quarter, supposed to be kindled by hot balls. Though this scene was horrible and altogether new to most of our men, yet many stood and received wounds, by swords and bayonets, before they quitted their lines. The number of killed and wounded on our side is not yet known. Our men are in high spirits.

"'The number of regulars engaged is supposed to be between two and three thousand.'"

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